

'So ist Freiheit nicht zu retten'

Nature, Man and Freedom: A

Prolegomenon To Kant's Political Philosophy



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ABSTRACT

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A Prolegomenon To Kant's Political Philosophy

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This work is an effort to develop an interpretative framework for Kant's political philosophy that will illuminate not merely the political philosophy itself, but will have the additional advantage of showing the integral rather than the peripheral connexion of that philosophy with Kant's wider philosophical concerns. In this sense the essay is not an extended explication or critical commentary on Kant's political theory so much as an attempt to establish a context within which such commentary might proceed.

The context which is suggested is Kant's anthropology, that is to say, his concept of persons, a notion which is foundational to both his political philosophy and the entire Critical philosophy. The difficulty with such an approach is that Kant nowhere develops in an explicit and extended fashion his concept of persons, and thus the essay is in one way an effort of recovery, first from the historical accounts of human origins and progress, next from the teleological theories of the third Critique and the Anthropology, then from the doctrine of man as end, and finally from Religion, of a systematic account of what Kant believes persons to be.

In all of these diverse efforts to make sense of man, it is argued that Kant's central concept for discussing persons is the idea of freedom, though depending on the context this notion is often linked to another, for instance, in the historical works with Nature, in the Groundwork with reason and morality, and in Religion with evil. Thus all of these other ideas become either extensions of or elucidations of freedom. The idea of Freedom as the foundation of personhood is, however, given its most crucial role in Kant's characterization of persons as ends in themselves. It is this doctrine which is foundational for much of subsequent Western political theory, and which is essential for Kant's political and moral theory. Chapters Three, Four, and Five are thus the core of the essay in that they suggest first that Kant's very strong claims about persons as ends will not work in terms of his own arguments and are rendered even more conceptually suspect in light of his subsequent account of radical evil, and second an alternative reading, proposed by Kant if not finally entirely accepted by him which might provide a more plausible foundation for his basic insights about persons.

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INTRODUCTION

They make a great show of understanding men...without understanding man and what can be made of him, for they lack the higher point of view of anthropological observation which is needed for this.

This essay is an attempt to develop an interpretive framework for Kant's political philosophy, a framework which not simply makes sense of that political theory itself, but also allows it to be placed within the context of the critical philosophy as something central rather than peripheral. In a sense the work grows out of a dissatisfaction with the marginal significance that Kant's political philosophy is generally accorded by most Kantian scholars.² Despite the recent renewed interest in Kantian epistemology and metaphysics and, indeed, in even Kantian religion and aesthetics, Kant's political philosophy is still seen by most philosophers as of interest to only the most dedicated connoisseur of minor political treatises. On the face of it there is admittedly some justification for this view. Kant, in his three Critiques, speaks but rarely of politics in an explicit sense. And in even the most 'straightforwardly' political texts, social and political concepts are most often introduced through law and history rather than by political analysis. Moreover, Kant did not write extensively about political philosophy (roughly 4-5%

of his work deals with politics), and what he did write was for the most part a product of his old age, a fact that leads many commentators to dismiss it as merely inspired senility. Finally, and perhaps most conclusively, virtually all of Kant's political writings are occasional pieces that appear not to be integrated within the scheme of the critical philosophy.

But the work is occasioned not simply by a dissatisfaction with the minor role that most of Kant's commentators allow his political philosophy but also with the ways in which his political theory is treated by those who do take it seriously. Despite a fair number of recent works on Kant's political philosophy, most commentators do not treat Kant's thought as providing either much of inherent interest or conceptual coherence, but rather simply as a convenient example of one variety of republicanism, or international legal theory, or as a foil to the author's own programme of political philosophy. Thus while there are a number of studies that examine Kant's relationship to Rousseau, his thoughts on the French Revolution, his place in the social contract and natural law tradition, his commitment to peace and world government and his theory of positive law, there are very few works which seek to develop a full account of Kant's political presuppositions and methodology and the ways in which these both generate his political doctrines and relate to his larger philosophical concerns.³

In one sense, perhaps, Kant's political theory suffers from being too well known in that its deceptively straightforward arguments about liberal republicanism at the level of the nation state and world peace through law in the international arena that are to be found in Theory and Practice and the Metaphysical Elements of Justice appear to make it not merely contextless but unproblematic as well.

This essay wishes to argue that the content of Kant's political philosophy is most often misread because it is not seen within the context of the larger philosophical problems that Kant attempted to solve. Why, for instance, does Kant found his political and social order at both the national and international levels so resolutely on freedom and law? The usual answer has been to suggest that he was simply a man of the Enlightenment, articulating quite common eighteenth century principles. We wish to argue that while Kant is in many senses a typical eighteenth century figure, in others, most particularly in his philosophy of religion (which is crucial to his political theory), he was a quite uncommon Enlightenment man. The reason, we shall suggest, that Kant centres his 'straightforward' political theories conjointly on law and freedom is to be found in his philosophical anthropology which argues that personhood can only be properly ascribed to those who, perhaps paradoxically, act in accordance with the 'laws of freedom.'

This essay then attempts to provide a hermeneutical key, a context for understanding and evaluating the content of

Kant's political philosophy, and, indeed, the critical philosophy as a whole. We shall argue that what joins together not simply Kant's political theory with his wider philosophical concerns but also his theories of history, religion and education with the critical philosophy, is a philosophical anthropology the central conception of which is man as both determined and free, as at once autonomous and subject to law. Kant's anthropology is thus not peripheral to his political theory nor to the critical philosophy but indispensably central to both.

At first glance such claims might well appear to be neither controversial nor unconventional. It might be suggested that all political theories inasmuch as they advocate various patterns of institutional arrangements governing the lives of men together presuppose certain beliefs about the character and capacities of persons. Or, it might be argued, for instance, that it is merely a truism that the central thesis of the critical philosophy is a thesis about man's freedom, and that Kant's political theory has always been understood as an attempt to develop the implications of individual autonomy for the institutional arrangement of men in community. But if it is a truism, it is one whose significance has nonetheless appeared to have escaped the notice of a good many of Kant's commentators, and most especially a good many of those whose interest has focused more narrowly on his political philosophy. There is, to be sure, much within most commentaries on Kant's

political theory about freedom, but it is for the most part commentary on a notion of freedom that is at one remove from Kant's rich, varied and immensely complex doctrine. Most students of Kant are quite content to examine the doctrine of freedom in its final form, or rather what they take to be its final form, in the institutional contours of the liberal state, rather than in its earlier and more paradoxical incarnation in the Kantian theory of man. To use a Kantian metaphor, they have examined the superstructure of freedom without noticing its foundations.⁴ But if one is to make sense of Kant's concept of freedom, and in doing so make sense not merely of his political theory but of his entire critical philosophy, one must locate and explicate it first hand within the philosophical anthropology. And seen thus it displays far more conceptual tension, ambiguity and, indeed, interest, than are ever apparent in the neat legal formulations and counsels of mixed government that pass in most instances for Kant's social and political philosophy.

The central claims of the essay may thus be set out as follows.

(1) Foundational to both the critical philosophy and to Kant's Weltanschauung and most especially to his political theory is his philosophical anthropology which conceives of man as simultaneously inhabiting two orders, the order of nature characterized by causal regularity and the order of freedom characterized by autonomy and spontaneity. Kant's strategy for making sense of this

duality of personhood is initially purely formal and epistemological in the sense that the first Critique is devoted to an exposition of the conditions necessary for there to be any experience of a world. These conditions emerge, of course, as the Kantian categorical schema, central to which is the category of causality which is, Kant insists, constitutive of all phenomenal experience.

(2) Kant, however, is not interested - whatever his subsequent interpreters may have believed - in sketching merely the conceptual prerequisites for experience in general. His interest is not simply with the conditions which allow one to experience the world, but the conditions which make possible particular sorts of experience. Thus equally as important to his purposes as the question what are the conditions that make experience possible are the questions about the conditions necessary for moral experience, political experience and religious experience. These sorts of specific experience, which appear at times, though Kant could not formally allow this, to be as foundational as experience in general, cannot be explained by reference to the categorical schema which includes causality. Rather, they demand the 'category' of freedom which Kant defines as the ability to spontaneously initiate events.

(3) Kant is thus left with a deeply bi-furcated anthropology in which experience at its most general and abstract levels appears to be possible only when

conceptualized under the category of universal causality while the particular dimensions of moral, political and religious experience seem to be coherent only as they are understood as the 'product' of freedom. Kant resolves this tension in a variety of ways but common to them all is his insistence that what is unique, and thus crucially important to man in the sense of making him the only absolutely valuable being in the natural world, is his rational freedom. This does not mean that causality and the realm of nature which it represents are excised from Kant's anthropology, but rather that they hereafter play a less substantial role in that man's genuine personhood is increasingly portrayed by Kant as something that can only occur as he is less a part of the natural order, something that nature itself, perhaps paradoxically, facilitates, and, at the same time, causality's regularity and objectivity, in effect, its lawfulness, is supplanted by the moral law within and the good will which together determine freedom's proper tasks.

(4) Two interrelated conceptual strands, then, dominate Kant's mature attempt to create an anthropology that can accommodate without undue tension the entire range of human experience. The first strand, to be found in Conjectural beginning of human History, Idea for a Universal history from a Cosmopolitan Point of View, and Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View, provides a general account of nature's ambiguous role in the emergence and development

of mankind's distinctive capacities for using reason in opposition to inclination. Kant's interest here is not merely the emancipation of man from nature, with all that this means in terms of a human 'nature' characterized by reason, freedom and morality, but also the adequate conceptual characterization of a natural order that so aptly facilitates such emancipation.

The second strand, which occurs primarily though not exclusively in the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, approaches man not through the avenue of historical development with its implicit presupposition of man's character in process and yet far from completed, but rather through the somewhat more formal route of explicating those conditions necessary not merely for some moral or political experience, but for any moral, political and religious experience. Kant argues that it is impossible to conceive of our moral and political experience possessing the character than it does without presupposing the absolute worth of all rational and moral human agents.⁵ Inasmuch as rational and moral and indeed free are read here as acting in accordance with the moral law, the moral law becomes, in a fashion, the ethical counterpart of nature's law of causal regularity. Hence the famous Kantian claim about man as an absolute end in himself appears to unite both the historical account of mankind's development and the formal account of the necessary conditions for moral, political and religious

experience into a doctrine of man centering on man's rational and volitional abilities.

(5) This synthesis of the historical and theologically necessary dimensions of human character is, however, inherently problematic in at least two closely connected senses. First, there is an obvious tension, a tension that Kant is alive to but ultimately fails to resolve satisfactorily, between what might be termed the historical anthropology which portrays man in the process of assuming his status as absolute end and theological anthropology that founds man's value as end and simultaneously his moral, political and social projects on a rational and free character already achieved. This is not simply the familiar tension between man's present status and his future status, his being and his becoming, for Kant appears to resist, partly as a consequence of his commitment to a timeless noumenal world, seeing persons in such a straightforwardly chronological sense, preferring instead to insist, with no little paradox, on man's simultaneous already and not-yet character, on his both completed and not-yet perfected nature.

Second, this tension is further complicated by the emergence, late in Kant's life, of a most non-Enlightenment problem, radical evil, that is an evil so fundamentally corruptive of man's unique capacities for rationality, morality and freedom that it undermines his status as end and renders uncertain virtually all of his moral and

political projects. Kant is able to solve this problem only by resort, against all of the counsels of pure, if not practical reason, to a relatively vigorous form of theism in which morality is rescued by a metaphysics where grace supplements man's rational and volitional abilities and in which a moral-religious kingdom of ends stands besides, surely supplementing, if not supplanting the political order.

(6) Kantian political man, man as citizen of and dignified end of both republican nation state and the international legal order, emerges then only in the context of Kant's efforts to save man's freedom where salvation is construed in the broadest possible sense and effected through a variety of natural and supernatural agencies. Kant's man as citizen finally makes no sense apart from his historical connexion with man as the child of nature and his ontological kinship with man as the rational and moral agent who is both attracted and repelled by the demands of the moral law. In this sense, Kant's philosophical anthropology is quite genuinely an indispensable prolegomenon to his political theory, for in determining the character of rational human agents, it sets as it were, the very parameters for both the questions and the answers of political philosophy. But in another sense, the philosophical anthropology transcends the role of mere prolegomenon inasmuch as in its moral-religious dimension, which is arguably its most crucial aspect, it suggests that

man's status as end can be realized only within an ethical community of ends created and sustained not by political ingenuity but by divine action. In the end it is not man's citizenship within the political order that is important, but rather his citizenship within the moral and religious kingdom.

These claims in turn provide the structure of the essay. In chapter One we examine the role of anthropology in Kant's philosophy in general, and more specifically the development of his understanding of the various ways in which the central aspect of philosophical anthropology - the tension arising from conceiving of man simultaneously as a being within the natural, determined order and the moral, free order might be resolved. In chapter Two our focus turns from the general claims of Kantian anthropology to Kant's historical account of man's emancipation from the natural order and the implications this has not simply for human character but for the social and political order. Chapter Three, in contrast, leaves aside the historical dimensions of Kantian man and concentrates almost exclusively on the formal account of personhood - man as end - to be found in the Groundwork an account which is so often taken as the only Kantian conception of persons. Our purpose here is not to quarrel with the centrality of the doctrine of man as end in himself within Kant's anthropology, but to demonstrate the ways in which this formal account attempts to unite the themes developed in the

historical account of man's origin and development into a doctrine of man which roots his essence in his rationality and freedom. Chapter Four examines Kant's increasing skepticism about the viability of his doctrine of man as absolute end in himself in the face of 'radical evil' and the ways in which he seeks to rescue the doctrine through the divine 'supplement' of grace. Finally, in chapter Five we attempt to demonstrate how this subtle, religiously determined anthropology of freedom shapes Kant's political philosophy, both straightforwardly through the institutional implications of the claims about man as end in himself, and more subtly through Kant's skepticism about historical progress and his belief that genuine moral transformation, which is finally the key to political change, can only occur in the trans-political kingdom of ends.

References

- ¹ I Kant, 'Perpetual Peace' in On History, Trans. by L. Beck, R. Anchor & E. Fackenheim (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 121.
- ² K. Jaspers and E. Caird are exceptions to this generalization. Both devote substantial treatment to Kant's political philosophy.
- ³ Two English language works and one German monograph are notable exceptions: G. A. Kelly, Idealism, Politics and History, and M. Despland, Kant on History and Religion, H. Saner, Kant's Political Thought: Its Origin and Development.
- ⁴ Pure Reason, A319.
- ⁵ See I. Kant, The Doctrine of Virtue: Part II of The Metaphysic of Morals, Trans. by M. J. Gregor (New York, Harper & Row, 1964), p. 116.

Chapter I

KANT'S WELTANSCHAUUNG: THE PROBLEM OF MAN AS THE PROBLEM OF THE CRITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy must therefore assume that no true contradiction will be found between freedom and natural necessity in the same human actions, for it cannot give up the concept of nature any more than that of freedom.

I

Kantian studies, perhaps constrained by the conceptual and organizational rigour of Kant's own thought, have tended, for the most part, to be rather narrowly defined works appealing respectively to the historian of ideas and the professional philosopher interested in a particular aspect of Kant's thought. Thus while we have numerous accounts of Kant's epistemology, metaphysics, legal theory, ethics, political thought, scientific and religious theories, we have relatively few attempts to unite these disparate elements into anything resembling a coherent Kantian 'world-view'.² There are, of course, a good many who would suggest that this absence of a definitive Kantian Weltanschauung is inherent in the very nature of Kant's work. Outside of the Critiques, the interrelationship of

which might well be more forced than genuinely organic, Kant's writings are quite simply occasional in the sense of being motivated and conceived in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. We thus find no satisfying world-view because there quite simply is none, and we seriously misconstrue Kant's purposes if we attempt a synthesis, in either the traditionally 'grand' fashion, or the more austere modern manner, of deliberately separate works.

But to see the efforts of a mind as highly schematic as Kant's as nothing more than piecemeal and occasional conceptualizations is not only to ignore the evidence, both explicit and implicit, from Kant's own hand about his intellectual development, but to ignore as well the existence within all of his works of certain central concepts and problems. This chapter argues the thesis that the hermen^eutical key to Kant's world-view, the conception that provides the underlying coherence to the various strands of his philosophical enterprise is a philosophical anthropology founded on an understanding of man as simultaneously an inhabitant of two orders, the order of nature and the order of freedom. For the moment our concern is not with the precise structure of this anthropology, but rather simply with its continuing role throughout Kant's career in structuring his philosophical agenda.

The description of Kant's critical philosophy as in reality as philosophical anthropology would no doubt strike

a good many of even the most causal students of Kant as a fundamental mis-perception of the major Kantian texts. Not only do most of Kant's works seem to lack an anthropological focus of any sort, but his one explicitly anthropological essay, Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View (hereafter Anthropology), might be read as nothing more than a badly disjointed series of confused empirical observations and lecture-room anecdotes published during the last years of Kant's life, and thus hardly capable of taking its place as the guiding conceptual structure of the critical philosophy. With relatively few exceptions, most of Kant's commentators have argued that while Kant's views on religion, history, politics and even ethics are certainly interesting, they are at one remove from his central philosophical interest in epistemology. On this accepted reading, the centrepiece of Kant's system is the first Critique with its careful elaboration of the necessary conditions for sensible experience. The works on aesthetics, religion and ethics, not to mention politics, assume interest only as they are read as somewhat curious extensions of Kantian epistemology which confirm or more likely undermine the tenets of the first Critique. Thus, for instance, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone (hereafter Religion), is nothing more than Kant's curiously contrived old-age attempt to satisfy himself that he had not rendered supernatural speculation entirely illegitimate; a conceptual charlatanism that runs afoul of the mature

epistemology at every theistic turn. Similarly, the ethical works rather than being read as attempts to accord freedom the same epistemic status as natural necessity - that of an indispensable conceptual pre-requisite of a particular sort of experience - are seen as naive and often bungled attempts at moral psychology or earnest homily. What is decidedly odd about these readings of Kant the epistemologist is that they do not square either with Kant's own explicit statements of his intentions nor with the ways in which he conceives - over a period of some forty years - the central problems and solutions of the 'critical' philosophy. Let us begin with Kant's specific statements about what it is that unifies his philosophical vision, and then see whether our claim about a philosophical anthropology which attempts to elucidate man's dual character can in fact provide the conceptual underpinning to Kant's system that we suggest.

On three occasions³ Kant provides a reasonably explicit statement about his philosophical intentions. In the best known instance, in the first Critique, he notes that

All the interest of my reason, speculative as well as practical, combine in the three following questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?
3. What may I hope?

The first question is merely speculative. We have, as I flatter myself, exhausted all the possible answers to it, and at last found the answer with which reason must perforce content itself, and with which, so long as it takes no account of the practical, it has also good cause to be satisfied. But from the two great ends to which the whole endeavour of pure reason was really directed, we have remained just as far removed as if through love of ease we had declined this labour of enquiry at the very outset.⁴

Here then Kant is outlining not simply his own conceptual programme, but that of reason in general. And having satisfactorily concluded his investigation of the first question he notes, in a passage which lends considerable support to the reading of his work as purely epistemological, that 'so far, then, as knowledge is concerned this much, at least, is certain and definitively established, that in respect of these two latter problems, knowledge is unattainable by us.'⁵ Kant, is however, unwilling to accept the conclusion to which his own investigation of the principles of pure reason has led him, for he quite clearly recognizes that in the end all that he can know, in the strictest sense, is that human experience must be conceived under the concept of universal causality and that the existence of any ontological entities cannot be demonstrated. This means that his two metaphysical questions - the 'two great ends to which the whole endeavour of pure reason was really directed' must remain unanswered. But while the first Critique does not attempt to solve this problem in any detail, it suggests the fact that Kant does not consider the second and third questions as peripheral and the fashion in which he will subsequently attempt to resolve them.

Kant's answer to 'What can I know?' had centred on the idea of necessary conditions of experience, that is, conditions necessary for persons to have any sort of experience of a world. These conditions which make

experience possible also structure it as a particular sort of experience - the experience of an empirical world. That is to say that while the structures of experience render our empirical experiences orderly they also simultaneously sharply limit them in the sense that they can provide no account of what Kant terms 'speculative ideas'. Our human experience of the world, however, is not merely empirical experience for which we seek theoretical illumination, it also embraces a moral consciousness, which while in some senses empirical is also beyond the empirical. The phenomena of moral consciousness thus reveals a world of experience to which the theoretical principles which order and explain ordinary empirical experience appear not to apply. But this other world of experience must have some principles which condition it, otherwise it would not be an experience of anything at all. And Kant suggests that pure reason in its 'practical employment' might in fact provide certain principles necessary for the moral experience which stands alongside of our ordinary empirical experiences.

Pure reason, then contains, not indeed in its speculative employment, but in that practical employment which is also moral, principles of possibility of experience, namely, of such actions as, in accordance with moral precepts, might be met with in the history of mankind....Consequently, a special kind of systematic unity, namely the moral, must likewise be possible. We have indeed found that the systematic unity of nature cannot be proved in accordance with speculative principles of reason. For although reason does indeed have causality in respect of freedom in general, it does not have causality in respect of nature as a whole...⁶

There is thus a moral analogy to sense experience in that an examination of our moral consciousness discloses - though we are ultimately unable to comprehend them in their theoretical dimensions - an inter-related series of conditions, chief of which is freedom, that make moral experience itself conceivable. And 'it is in their practical, meaning thereby their moral, employment, that the principles of pure reason have objective reality.'⁷ Kant, consequently, feels admirably justified in speaking of a moral world which human persons inhabit just as certainly as the sensible world.

I entitle the world a moral world, in so far as it may be in accordance with all moral laws; and this is what by means of the freedom of the rational being it can be and what according to the necessary laws of morality it ought to be....The idea of a moral world has, therefore, objective reality, not as referring to an object of an intelligible intuition ... but as referring to the sensible world, viewed, however, as being an object of pure reason in its practical employment, that is as a corpus mysticum of the rational beings in it, so far as the free will of each being is, under moral laws, in complete systematic unity with itself and with the freedom of every other.⁸

In light of this 'moral world', the epistemic question loses its initially central importance for 'it is evident that the ultimate intention of nature in her wise provision for us has indeed, in the constitution of our reason, been directed to moral interests alone [nur aufs Moralische].'⁹

But aside from this statement of intentions that comes towards the conclusion of the first Critique, Kant also provides a summary of his philosophical objectives in both the Logic and in an important letter of 1793 to C. F.

Staudlin. In both of these instances Kant extends his outline to four questions.

...the plan I prescribed for myself a long time ago calls for an examination of the field of pure philosophy with a view to solving three problems: (1) What can I know? (metaphysics). (2) What ought I to do? (Moral philosophy). (3) What may I hope? (philosophy of religion). A Fourth question ought to follow, finally: What is man? (anthropology, a subject on which I have lectured for over twenty years.)¹⁰

Aside from the fact that Kant here treats even the first question as metaphysical rather than epistemological, it is important to note that this outline, not Kant's after-the-fact reconstruction of his conceptual development, but the recounting of a plan-prescribed...a long time ago' - which governed the development of the Critical philosophy.

Moreover, all of the questions focus quite obviously on human nature - what can man know? what ought he to do? and for what may he hope? - with the fourth question, as Kant suggests, pulling together, as Kant attempts to do in the final part of his Anthropology, the somewhat disparate aspects of personhood that emerge from the answers to the previous questions.

Two letters, one to Moses Mendelssohn in 1766 and the other to J. S. Beck in 1791 corroborate the importance of human nature in Kant's thinking suggested by his reduction of philosophy to the famous four questions noted above. In the letter to Mendelssohn, Kant suggests that his central philosophical preoccupation is whether there is, or indeed,

can ever be, sufficient data to be able to understand how
'the soul is present in the world...'

If, for the time being, we put aside arguments based on the propriety or on the divine purposes and ask whether it is ever possible to attain such knowledge of the nature of the soul from our experience - a knowledge sufficient to inform us of the manner in which the soul is present in the universe, in relation both to matter and to begins of its own sort - we shall see whether birth ..., life, and death are matters we can ever hope to understand by means of reason.

Kant is certainly interested in knowledge, but epistemology is cast here in the context of personhood in that it is knowledge of the 'nature of the soul', its birth, life and death, which is Kant's real interest.

The letter to Beck in which Kant attempts to convince him to undertake the task of writing a summary of Kant's works, strikes a similar note of anthropological primacy. 'Now what can serve better for this and for a lifetime than investigating something that concerns the whole nature of man, especially if one has the hope of making some progress from time to time by a systematic effort of thought. Besides, the history of the world and of philosophy are tied up with this enterprise....',¹²

The centrality of human nature in Kant's conceptual agenda is even more apparent in the passage from the Logic where after listing the four questions of a 'cosmopolitan philosophy', Kant notes that the first three are in fact really anthropological questions themselves.

The field of philosophy in this cosmopolitan sense may be reduced to the following questions:

1. What can I know?
2. What ought I to do?

3. What may I hope for?

4. What is man?

The first question is answered by metaphysics, the second by morals, the third by religion, and the fourth by anthropology.¹³ In the end, all may be related to the fourth.

This is not to suggest that Kant always conceived of his work as primarily anthropological, as directed toward man in the broadest sense. His conversion to a philosophical anthropology aimed at securing the 'rights of mankind', both conceptual and political, seems to have been occasioned by his reading of Rousseau during the early sixties.

By inclination I am an inquirer. I feel a consuming thirst for knowledge, the unrest which goes with the desire to progress in it, and satisfaction at every advance in it. There was a time when I believed this constituted the honor of humanity, and I despised the people, who know nothing. Rousseau corrected me in this. This blinding prejudice disappeared. I learned to honor man, and I would find myself more useless than the common laborer if I did not believe that this attitude of mine can give a worth to all others in establishing the rights of mankind.¹⁴

But it was not simply Rousseau's general enthusiasm for mankind and his belief in the significance of philosophical anthropology that attracted Kant, but his recognition that beneath the vagaries of historical man there was, accessible to the patient observer, an essential man. 'Among the multitude of forms assumed by man,' Kant notes, 'Rousseau first discovered man's deeply hidden nature and the concealed law by the observation of which providence justified.'¹⁵ Kant's debt to Rousseau has often been chronicled in terms of the notions of will, obligation, contract, equality, rights and freedom, but Rousseau's real importance to Kant might lie not so much in particular

philosophical notions as in his conviction about the foundational character of a theory of human nature.¹⁶ In this sense, of course, Kant's commitment to anthropology is not unique, even though his conception of personhood may well be.

The belief in the significance of human nature for philosophical reflection is evident as well in Kant's own outline of his ethics lectures for the winter term of 1765-66 where he notes that

in ethics I always consider historically and philosophically what happens before I point out what ought to happen, I shall make clear the method by which one must study man - not the man who, through the variable form which his chance condition impresses upon him, is distorted and as such has almost always been misjudged by philosophers, but the abiding nature of man and its unique position in creation.

This notion of an abiding trans-historical nature of man as distinct from its historically conditioned particular manifestation as the only proper foundation for philosophy is also found in the first Critique in a passage devoted explicitly to political philosophy. At the beginning of the Transcendental Dialectic, in a discussion of Plato's Republic, Kant is sharply critical of those who suggest that Plato's perfect commonwealth is nothing more than a perfect vision, incapable of realization. Rather than dismissing the ideas as impossible, 'we should ... be better advised to follow this thought, and, where the great philosopher leaves us without help, to place it, through fresh efforts, in a proper light'.¹⁸ Judged from an empirical perspective, which focuses on the 'hindrances' the 'adverse experience'

which count against the realization of Plato's idea (and by extension Kant's own version of it as well), such a political order does appear visionary. But in deciding whether this goal is indeed capable of fulfillment we must 'abstract from the actually existing hindrances, which, it may be, do not arise unavoidably out of human nature, but rather are due to a quite remediable cause, the neglect of the pure ideas in the making of the laws.'¹⁹ Political philosophy in particular and philosophy in general Kant argues, can thus proceed only after it has considered the 'abiding nature of man'. Plato's perfect political order is rejected on the ground that it is impractical, an assertion which in turn depends on a particular understanding of human nature. Kant's suggestion is that the obstacles to certain political aspirations might not be inherent within human nature, but reside instead in a particular vision of human possibilities that may well be false. Men may fail to realize both the perfect republic and their own individual potentiality for moral perfection precisely because they fall victim to a pervasive misunderstanding - originating in their historical epoch and unquestionably accepted by philosophy - about their individual and collective capacities. As Kant notes, 'Nothing is more reprehensible than to derive the laws prescribing what ought to be done from what is done.'²⁰ Philosophy's task, both in its political and general dimension, is the 'less resplendent, but still meritorious' one of leveling 'the ground, to

render, it sufficiently secure for moral edifices of ... majestic dimensions',²¹ through providing an anthropology which distinguishes the historically contingent versions of man from his abiding essence and his present condition from what he may yet become.

II

But even if Kant does intend that human nature in all of its dimensions should provide the unifying conception of the Critical philosophy we are still left with the question as to whether this intention is realized. Can we in fact read perhaps not all, but certainly the central works of Kant as sustained attempts to make sense of man? In one sense this is the central thesis of this essay, and we do not wish to anticipate the argument of subsequent chapters, which attempts to lay bare the detailed structure of Kant's anthropology. Here our concern is to elucidate in nothing more than outline the major elements of Kant's notion of persons and to demonstrate the ways in which they shape the development of the entire philosophy.

Kantian man is more than anything else an ambiguous being - for he is at once a creature of inestimable worth and dignity, possessing reason and thereby the possibility of freedom, capable, or at least commanded, to pursue perfection, and hopeful of attaining it, and a creature of frailty and weakness, his genuine freedom always a tenuous possession in the face of nature's power, his goodness

undermined by radical evil and his reason thwarted by an animal nature that often makes him despair of achieving even the most modest of his cognitive and moral projects. It is tempting, at times even to the most sympathetically inclined to Kant's intellectual programme, to read this ambiguity as simply contradiction, as an incoherence born of an inattention to detail or an inability to bring into some satisfactory synthesis things that should fit together. However attractive, this temptation ought to be resisted, for Kant's subtly ambiguous picture of man is the result neither of slipshod conceptualization nor intellectual fatigue but rather is the product of a consistent attempt to develop a coherent notion of personhood that is true to two quite incompatible kinds of experience, the experience of nature and the experience of freedom. As Lewis White Beck observes:

The ultimate issue which Kant faced consists in the logical incompatibility between the objective and subjective conditions of scientific knowledge. It is the disharmony between the object of science and the human ends it is made to serve.²²

Kant's 'two standpoint' theory is founded on an ambiguity that is conceptually ineradicable precisely because his view of persons is not reconcilable with the crudeness of an either/or anthropology that centres humanness on either nature or freedom. Man, in effect, is a being who, while capable of rational freedom, must yet exercise that freedom in a natural world of sensuous inclination. Nature for Kant is never swallowed up in freedom, just as the phrase human

nature, while suggesting man's distinctiveness still reminds one of his natural connections. To claim that man has a human nature is thus in Kant's view not a tautology, for the phrase illuminates the ontological ambiguity of a being who must shape himself in the unfamiliar and uncomfortable landscape where humanness and nature intersect.

This tension resulting from the interpenetration of man and nature in which each wears something of the other's character so that one can speak of the humanness of nature and the naturalness of man, is evident in all of Kant's formulations of problem of man. Thus the first Critique, in speaking of the 'legislation of human reason', informs us that philosophy has 'two objects, nature and freedom, and therefore contains not only the law of nature, but also the moral law',²³ and while these two perspectives on personhood might at first appear as 'two distinct systems', they are ultimately both synthesizable in 'one single philosophical system.'²⁴ The same point re-appears in the introduction to the third Critique where in speaking about the rational cognition of objects Kant argues that 'there are but two kinds of concepts, and these yield a corresponding number of distinct principles of the possibility of their objects. The concepts referred to are those of nature and that of freedom.'²⁵

The classic accounts of this anthropological dualism however occur in the Antinomy of Pure Reason in the first Critique and in the penultimate section of the Foundations

of the Metaphysics of Morals (hereafter Foundation). In the Antinomy Kant speaks of man as possessing a joint empirical-intelligible character.

In its empirical character, therefore, this subject, as appearance, would have to conform to all the laws of causal determination. To this extent it could be nothing more than a part of the world of sense, and its effects, ... must be the inevitable outcome of nature... In its intelligible character...this same subject must be considered to be free from all influence of sensibility and from all determination through appearances.²⁶

With an empirical character originating in and subject to nature, and in intelligible character outside of causality and determined only the the laws of freedom man

is one of the appearances of the sensible world, and in so far one of the natural causes the causality of which must stand under empirical laws. Like all other things in nature, he must have an empirical character.... Man, however, who knows all the rest of nature solely through his sense, knows himself also through pure [blosse] apperception; and this, indeed, in acts and inner determinations which he cannot regard as impressions of the sense. He is thus to himself, on the one hand phenomenon, and²⁷ on the other hand, ... a purely intelligible object.

The same duality of personhood with the empirical character or self and the intelligible or noumenal character, is to be found in the Foundations. The distinction between one's empirical and intelligible selves, and, indeed, of one's self from everything else as well, is, Kant suggests, a product of reason. Even then while seeing themselves as bifurcated, persons view their membership in the 'world of understanding', the intelligible world, a membership made possible by their unique possession of

rationality and freedom, as more significant than their simultaneous standing in the empirical world.

Thus he has two standpoints from which he can consider himself and recognize the laws of the employment of his powers and consequently of all his actions: first, as belonging to the world of sense, under the laws of nature (heteronomy), and second, as belonging to the intelligible world under laws which independent of nature, are not empirical but founded only on reason.²⁸

Kant is emphatic that neither of these two 'standpoints' can be dispensed with, for 'in respect to their will, all men think of themselves as free', while experience also suggests that 'it is equally necessary that everything which happens should be inexorably determined by natural laws....'²⁹

Hence arises the 'dialectic of reason' which attempts to show that despite the tension, 'we cannot give up the concept of nature any more than that of freedom.'³⁰

Personhood assumes then its uniquely human character not through the abandonment of the dialectic of nature and freedom but through providence's and reason's exploitation of it in the interests of freedom. Man, notes the third Critique, even while different from nature, is nonetheless not outside of it. He is rather nature's 'ultimate end' who can employ 'nature as a means in accordance with the maxims of his free ends'....³¹ As Kant remarks in his Lectures on Ethics, 'The end...for which man is destined is to achieve his fullest perfection through his own freedom.'³² And it is freedom, not nature, which provides the 'inner value of the world,'³³ a sentiment echoed in the preface to the second Critique where freedom is cited as the 'keystone of

the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason.'³⁴

But to put the matter in this fashion is to perhaps misunderstand Kant if we neglect the crucial connection which he consistently makes between freedom and reason. Man's intelligible character his independence from nature is not something that is given but something that is realizable only through his adherence to 'laws which independent of nature, are not empirical but founded only on reason.'³⁵ Reason is the agency which secures freedom, inasmuch as it founds actions not on the maxims derived from external sensuous motivation but on the rational consistency of the categorical imperative. Freedom's law, just as freedom is the inevitable expression of reason. As John Silber writes 'Reason, in Kant's philosophy, is essentially free; freedom is essentially rational...'³⁶ Neither reason nor freedom is, for Kant, conceivable apart from the other: irrational freedom and unfree reason are both conceptually impossible. Put slightly differently, reason is that capacity which allows persons to be genuinely self-determining rather than object-determined.³⁷

Conceived of in this fashion, freedom and reason are really forms of conceptual shorthand for a group of characteristics which Kant believes to be peculiarly human. One is tempted to say that freedom and particularly reason should be seen as multi-dimensional notions if for no other reason than to warn against the peculiarly stunted versions

of reason that so often pass as Kant's in much commentary. Reason is more than the capacity to make us self-directed through freeing us from the determination of sensuous motivation. Equally important in understanding Kant's sense of reason is to see it as encompassing the notions of cognitive completion, objectivity, and hope, ideas which parallel the three questions that structure the Critical philosophy itself. The first question, What can I know?, points to the gulf between reason's aspirations and abilities. Reason desires to fashion the entire conceptual order into an elaborated ontology yet appears forced to abandon these pretensions in the face of an epistemology which restricts its employment to the world of sense governed by uninterrupted causality, with the result that freedom's prospects appear substantially diminished.

The second question, What ought I to do?, however, suggests reason's vindication of freedom inasmuch as both morality's imperatives and freedom's capacities are as arguably 'rational' components of experience as empirical causality. Reason here, albeit in its practical employment, not only demonstrates the intellectual and indeed pragmatic legitimacy of freedom, but suggests through the elaboration of the categorical imperative its objective content. Reason is here read as objectivity, in the sense that persons have, when acting morally, the ability to escape the subjective conditions which normally determine their interests and instead consider things from the objective, the universal

perspective, and, for Kant, the only genuinely moral point of view.

The third question, What may I hope for?, links reason most clearly not simply with God and immortality, as is usually argued, but with the entire range of what may be termed existential questions centering on freedom's prospects in a determined world. Here reason must address not, as in the first Critique its epistemic limitations, but perhaps more seriously, its moral and spiritual infirmities, its susceptibility to despair. However certain its theoretical vindication, freedom is not saved in the end without reason's ability to create a niche on the conceptual landscape for hope, hope that in the face of everything ranging from nature's determination to evil's radical intrusion into the fabric of human willing, the world of man may yet be transformed. Reason's universe must allow room for a rational faith in freedom's realizability: the knowledge of the understanding must not falsify belief.

Reason in this elaborated sense of freedom, cognitive comprehensiveness, objectivity and hope is really Kant's fundamental anthropological category, and the central concept of the Critical philosophy as well. Kantian man is rational man, provided that rational is read in the properly ambiguous sense of man as cognitively audacious, yet epistemologically finite, driven by instincts, but yet able to set ends, enjoined to strive for perfection, but radically evil, desirous of certainty, yet forced to settle

for hope, responsible, but forced ultimately to accept divine assistance, unsocial yet fully realized only in the context of an ethical society. In one sense then, Kant's notion of persons is quite consistent with the anthropologies which preceded it, for it begins with the Cartesian bi-furcation of the world into nature, seen as mindless matter, and man, conceived of as essentially mind. While man possesses a body and thus to some extent 'lives' within the natural world, there is an irremediable gulf - a product of man's rational capacities - which divides man from nature. But in another quite different sense, Kant's anthropology is fundamentally adverse to such a radical 'denaturation' of human persons inasmuch as in its final form it embraces a teleology that endeavours to unite nature and men. The key to Kant's anthropology is thus a complex tension between nature, reason and freedom, a tension which 'creates' Kantian man and is to be found in a variety of forms in all of Kant's work from the earliest to the most mature.

III

With this preliminary conception of Kantian man before us we may now turn to the chapter's other key contention, that the Critical philosophy should be read as an extended attempt to 'solve' the nature-man problem through developing

a conception of persons sophisticated enough to embrace nature, reason and freedom.

Kant's first attempts to deal with the concepts of nature and man are in his scientific works, primarily Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens (1756), An Attempt to Introduce Negative Quantities into Philosophy (1763), and several essays on fire, space and time, and in his first theological works, An Attempt At Some Considerations on Optimism (1759), and Only Conceivable Proof for the Existence of God (1763). In these works Kant views nature and man as simultaneously mechanistic and purposive, thus reconciling Newtonian physics with Leibnizian teleology. Conceived of mechanistically, nature should be understood as constituting a harmonious, coherent and orderly whole under the determination of mathematical law. Matter fashions order in nature, Kant suggests, through the law of attraction and repulsion. The entire natural order is an endlessly repeated orchestration of attraction and repulsion, creation and destruction in which man and his interests appear to count for very little.³⁸

Man, according to Kant, is by nature a being of sensuous needs and desires which may be satisfied only through the development of reason. 'Man is needy, but also has power over his needs.'³⁹ Reason, however, is inherently limited by matter. 'If one seeks the cause of the obstacle which holds human nature in humiliation one finds it in the grossness of matter, in which its spiritual part is sunk.'⁴⁰

'The grossness of the stuff and fabric in the construction of human nature is the cause of that inertia which maintains the soul in stagnation and powerlessness.'⁴¹ Man, Kant argues, is the inhabitant of the natural world who is least successful in the fulfillment of his existential ends. The nature-man encounter of Kant's pre-critical works thus confronts man not with a conceptual limitation to his natural powers, reason is not limited as it is in the first Critique by its inherent epistemological capacities, but with a material limitation. Reason is limited, 'humiliated' by nature itself. Whereas Newton had at least retained God as a cosmic mechanic who made periodic adjustments to the world-machine; Kant sees nature as unlimited in its productive powers and conceptually coherent within the scope of its own laws.

Kant, however, is not content to abandon man to nature's indifference, for both within his Natural History and his Attempt At Some Considerations On Optimism he labours to counteract the constraints of mechanistic nature through the introduction of nature purposively conceived. The source for this limitation of nature's pretension is Christian theism.

While nature is understandable within the context of the laws of attraction and repulsion, and while nature's causality appears to determine the entire material order, nature, for Kant, is not self-legislating. Thought of theistically, nature's lawfulness, if not nature herself,

must be traced to an act of divine initiation. And it is precisely this divine ordering which provides the basis for reason's solace, indeed, reason's optimism, in the face of natural indifference and obstruction.

All nature, which involves a universal harmonious relation to the self-satisfaction of the Deity, cannot but fill the rational creature with an everlasting satisfaction, when it finds itself united with this Primary Source of all perfection. Nature, seen from this centre, will show on all sides utter security, complete adaptation. The changeful scenes of the natural world will not be able to disturb the restful happiness of a spirit which has once been raised to such a height. And while it already tastes beforehand this blessed state with a sweet hopefulness, it may at the same time utter itself in those songs of praise with which all eternity shall yet respond.⁴²

These arguments of 1755 for God's determination of the natural order are supplemented with the 1763 work The Only Possible Argument for the Demonstration of the Existence of God. This work contains both an a priori proof of God's existence and relation to nature and an a posteriori teleological argument for God's existence. Kant rejects the traditional Anselmian and Cartesian formulations of the ontological argument, as he did in the first Critique, on the grounds that existence is not a predicate, in favour of an argument from necessary existence. It is impossible that nothing should exist, thus something must necessarily exist. This necessary 'something' is, not surprisingly, a being who is the ultimate ground of everything, one, simple, unchangeable, eternal and spiritual.

Because from the recommended argument (der Beweisgrund) it follows further that the essence of all other things and the real element of all possibility are grounded in this single being in which the maximum degree of

understanding and will is to be harmonized to the greatest possible extent, it may be concluded in advance that, since a will always presupposes the internal possibility of the thing itself, the grounds of possibility that is the essence of God will be in greatest possible harmony with his will. [It is] not as though God were the ground of internal possibility through his will, but rather because the same infinite nature which has the relation of maximum desire for the greatest consequences given through it, and the latter can be fruitful only on the assumption of the former. Thus the possibilities of things that are themselves given through the divine nature harmonize with his great desire. But good and perfection consist of this harmonization. And because they harmonize with one single, principle unity, harmony and order⁴³ are to be met in the very possibilities of things.

Moreover, inasmuch as the concept of necessary being is an indispensable principle of reality, it must logically be also a principle of nature. Our understanding of nature cannot aspire to completeness if it ignores the concept of necessary being. As Kant remarks elsewhere:

All possibilities presuppose the notion of a most real being (ens realissimum). And this notion presupposes a concept of existence, since without being given realities can not be thought in sensation, but what is given in sensation exists. Absolute necessity rests upon the presupposition of the condition of all possibility, not upon the identity of a concept with itself from which no existence follows.⁴⁴

Nature, then, must, as a product of the necessary being, exhibit an order which is congruent with the final purposes of that being. Thus, at the end of the pre-critical period, Kant has attempted to sketch a tentative solution, a solution which provided a paradigm for his mature answer, to the problem of nature and man through the use of Leibnizian theism. Man may well be thwarted in the achievement of his ends by the indifference or hostility of nature, but this is offset, though not decisively, by the assurances of theistic

purpose found within a typically Enlightenment conception of rational religion.

Reason's esteem finds intellectual and aesthetic security and solace in the contemplation of a nature finally ordered for the best.

When one has filled one's mind with such considerations, the sight of a starry heaven on a serene night gives a kind of pleasure which only a noble soul can feel. In the general silence of nature and calm of the senses, the hidden knowledge-power of the immortal spirit speaks an ineffable language, and yields undeveloped concepts which we can experience but not express.⁴⁵

Kant is able then both to have and eat his conceptual cake in that science is allowed universal causality and explanatory primacy in the natural world while at the same time nature is subjected to a teleology outside of itself.

IV

Despite the conventional character of much of his pre-critical understanding of nature, man, and religion, Kant finds the understanding conceptually unsatisfactory. This is evident from the fact that beginning in 1781 with the publication of the Critique of Pure Reason, he embarks on a decidedly different strategy for coping with the nature-man problem. This strategy involves, at least initially, a bifurcation of reality into the realms of nature of morality followed by a subsequent tentative reapproachment.

The legislation of human reason (philosophy) has two objects, nature and freedom, and therefore contains not only the law of nature, but also the moral law, presenting them at first in two distinct systems, but

ultimately in one single philosophical system. The philosophy of nature deals with all that is, the philosophy of morals with that which ought to be.⁴⁶

Kant describes his work as a critical philosophy, that is a systematic inquiry into reason's powers. Thus while the Critique of Pure Reason is an attempt to develop an epistemology consistent with Newtonian science, it was also an effort through an articulation of the legitimate scope of reason's employment to define man in relation to nature. This definition, like the concept of man which emerged in the early scientific writings, centres on man's inherent limitations, though in the first Critique these limitations are conceptual rather than material. Man, as a rational being is limited because reason is dependent on knowledge and knowledge is in turn dependent not on self-generated objects but on the empirical content provided by sensibility.

Lest we be tempted to make too much of this limitation, it is well to recall that Kant's limitation on reason which derives from its dependence on the materials of sensibility is counter-balanced by reason's determining role in the knowing process. Reason contributes the a priori categories which make knowledge, any knowledge, possible. Objects so conceived are not the determining factors in the cognitive process.

[The] a priori conditions of a possible experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of objects of experience... Concepts of objects in general thus underlie all empirical knowledge as its a priori conditions. The objective validity of the categories as a priori concept rests...

on the fact that, so far as the form of thought is concerned, through them alone does experience become possible. They relate of necessity and a priori to objects of experience, for the reason that only by means of them⁴⁷ can any object whatsoever of experience be thought.

The cognitive process, Kant suggests, should be seen as occurring within the context of three faculties.

Sensibility provides the raw data or empirical content which the understanding, via its a priori categories, combines into objective events and objects, what Kant described as the unity of apperception. Nature in the Critique is thus the totality of phenomena in space and time perceived under the a priori categories of the understanding. Understood in this way as a series of phenomena, nature is infinite in extension, for each series of phenomena leads in turn to another series, and that series to another. Reason, the third of man's cognitive faculties, demands that this infinite regress of conditions be terminated by an unconditional totality. But reason, in its legitimate employment, cannot go beyond the empirical world of experience, which is precisely where such an unconditional totality can only be found. The paradox of reason and indeed, the source of reason's illusions, lies precisely in its finite capacities and its infinite pretensions.

Reason, however, Kant suggests, refuses to accept its conceptual limitations. Demanding the satisfaction of a coherent, completed conceptual system, reason 'by means of ideas along, (pushes) to the utmost limits of knowledge, and is not to be satisfied save through the completion of its

course in a self-subsistent systematic whole.'⁴⁸ What reason desires is 'pure rational knowledge', knowledge of an unconditioned, necessary object which is the unconditioned ground for the entire cognitive system. But according to the epistemological programme of the first Critique this sort of knowledge is by definition beyond any possible experience and thus outside the legitimate scope of reason's employment.

Kant, however, is prepared to thwart neither reason's desire for cognitive coherence nor freedom's demand for exemption from natural causality inasmuch as man is incoherent without both. Reason, for one thing, aside from its empirical capacity also has a practical capacity which allows it to transcend the limitations of sensibility.

...when all progress in the field of the super-sensible has thus been denied to speculative reason, it is still open to us to enquire whether in the practical knowledge of reason, data may not be found sufficient to determine reason's transcendent concept of the unconditioned, and so to enable us, in accordance with the wish of metaphysics, and by means of knowledge that is possible a priori, though only from a practical point of view, to pass beyond the limits of all possible experience. Speculative reason has thus at least made room for such an extension; and if it must at the same time leave it empty, yet none the less we are at liberty, indeed we are summoned to take occupation of it, if we can, by practical data of reason.⁴⁹

Moreover, reason's contradictions, as portrayed in the Antinomies, are only apparent. Man as phenomenon lives under the categories of space, time and causality. Man as noumenon exists outside of the natural order. Man and

nature appear then so hostile that only a radical separation can salvage the integrity and coherence of each.

Viewed from one perspective, the first Critique is a triumph of sorts for mechanistic nature. The laws of nature produced by the understanding bring all of the natural world under the category of causality, and it is precisely this exceptionless causality which makes nature, and man as part of nature, antithetical to freedom and morality. Man must seek what meaning he can as a genuinely purposive being in the noumenal world.

Consequently, all events are empirically determined in an order of nature. Only in virtue of this law can appearances constitute a nature and become objects of experience. This law is a law of the understanding from which no departure can be permitted, and from which no appearance may be exempted... The understanding can know in nature only what is, what has been, or what will be. We cannot say that anything in nature ought to be other than what in all these time-relations it actually is. When we have the course of nature alone in view, "ought" has no meaning whatsoever.⁵⁰

However, when the first Critique is placed within the perspective of the solution to the third Antinomy and the Critique of Practical Reason, this bifurcation of reality and triumph of nature and causality appear less certain. This is due to the fact that Kant, even in separating nature and man, does so in such a way as to allow for their ultimate reunion in the notion of a moral and religious teleology embracing both human and natural purposes.

He was careful to frame the division between nature and morality in such a way as to provide for the possibility not simply of their co-existence but of their integration, and thereby he laid down the fundamental directives for a revival of the traditional

coherent function which had been filled by the natural law. These directives indicate that the celebrated Kantian dualism was in fact an unbalanced dualism, for morality was not simply an equivalent counterpart of nature but was its ultimate foundation; and this transforms morality's apparent division from nature into an organic unity with it. Morality and nature were compatible not only as two separate series concerned with two different orders of reality, but as a relationship of dependence in which the moral noumena functioned as the final causes of the natural series of phenomena.⁵¹

This union, as suggested in the Critique of Practical Reason, is rooted in the ideas of super-sensuous nature, the moral law and a rational, moral faith. Kant's strategy here is to argue that additional to and morally if not epistemically more foundational to human personhood than the categories elaborated in the first Critique, categories which make experience in the general sense possible, are certain conceptual pre-requisites for moral, religious and political experiences, experiences which all persons have. These experiences cannot be convincingly explained through resort to the category of causality which has proven its usefulness in terms of the sensuous world. Instead, morality, and similarly related experiences can only be coherently conceived of under the category of freedom, which Kant explains using the ideas of super-sensuous nature, the moral law, and a moral faith.

Super-sensuous nature is man's noumenal character, man considered from the perspective of the super-sensuous world which is outside the phenomenal, causal order.

Nature, in the widest sense of the word, is the existence of things under laws. The sensuous nature of rational beings in general is their existence under

empirically conditioned laws, therefore, it is, from the point of view of reason heteronomy. The supersensuous nature of the same beings, on the other hand, is their existence according to laws which are independent of all empirical conditions and which therefore belong to the autonomy of pure reason. And since the laws, according to which the existence of things depends on cognition, are practical, supersensuous nature...is nothing else than nature under the autonomy of the pure practical reason. The law of this autonomy is the moral law, and it, therefore, is the fundamental law of supersensuous nature and of a pure world of the understanding, whose counterpart must exist in the world of sense without interfering with the laws of the latter.⁵³

Of course, one need not think, as it is by no means clear that Kant always did think, of this distinction between super-sensuous nature and sensuous nature and man as noumenon and phenomenon as an ontological distinction. The nature-man resolution which Kant is suggesting might well be conceived of as one which postulates not two but one reality viewed from two methodological perspectives. As Kant notes in the Preface to the second Critique:

In this way I can also understand why the most weighty criticisms of the Critique which have come to my attention turn about these two points: first, the reality of the categories as applied to noumena, which is denied in theoretical knowledge but affirmed in practical; and, second, the paradoxical demand to regard one's self, as subject to freedom, as noumenon, and yet from the point of view of nature to think of one's self as a₅₄ phenomenon in one's own empirical consciousness.

Notice that Kant does not here suggest that the noumena-phenomenon distinction is constitutive but that 'one should regard one's self, as subject to freedom, as noumenon, and yet from the point of view of nature to think of one's self...' (Emphasis mine), implying a regulative, a methodological distinction as opposed to an ontological one.

Thus the 'supersensuous nature is nothing else than nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason' does not imply an ontological so much as a conceptual perspective because nature is not ontologically transformed but merely seen under the lens of pure practical reason.

This reading is supported by Kant's suggestion in the third Critique that our characterizations of the world as governed by mechanical or teleological causation can never be decisively shown to be ontologically constitutive but only methodologically regulative.⁵⁵ If this suggestion is correct, and it can only be noted in passing that it flies in the face of much conventional wisdom about Kant, then the resolution of the nature-man tension of the second Critique is far more revisionistic of the first Critique than previously imagined; for in place of a bifurcated reality of nature and man we have but one world perceived in two ways.

But Kant, within the second Critique, offers a second basis for the nature-man synthesis, the relationship between laws of nature and the moral law.

The moral law has no other cognitive faculty to mediate its applications to objects of nature than the understanding...; and the understanding can supply to an idea of reason...a natural law. But this natural law can be used only in its formal aspect...; and it may, therefore, be called the type of moral law... Natural law serves only as the type of a law of freedom, for if common sense did not have something to use in actual experience as an example, it could make no use of the law of pure practical reason in applying it to that experience.⁵⁶

The categorical imperative which appeared initially as 'act only according to the maxim by which you can at the same

time will that it should become a universal law' is subsequently clarified as 'act as though the maxim of your action was by your will to become a universal law of nature.'⁵⁷ Kant is not suggesting that moral imperatives assume a determining role in the world of nature, though, of course, in as much as they are determinative of human behaviour, they do exercise a phenomenal role, but rather that the moral imperatives are understandable and hence rational only as they parallel the structure of natural law.

But the moral law is also the foundation for the third, and by far the most conceptually sophisticated basis for reuniting nature and man which is suggested in the second Critique, namely, Kant's theory of religion as a rational, moral faith.

In the Preface to the second Critique Kant sets forth the way in which the moral law provides the foundation for freedom, God and immortality.

The concept of freedom, in so far as its reality is proved by an apodictic law of practical reason, is the keystone of the whole architecture of the system of pure reason and even of speculative reason. All other concepts (those of God and immortality) which, as mere ideas, are unsupported by anything in speculative reason now attach themselves to the concept of freedom and gain, with it and through it, stability and objective reality. That is, their possibility is proved by the fact that there really is freedom, for this idea is revealed by the moral law.

Freedom, however, among all the ideas of speculative reason is the only one whose possibility we know a priori. We do not understand it, but we know it as the condition of the moral law which we do know. The ideas of God and immortality are, on the contrary, not conditions of the moral law, but only conditions of the necessary object of a will which is determined by this law, this will being merely the practical use of

our pure reason...Thus, through the concept of freedom, the ideas of God and immortality gain objective reality and legitimacy and indeed subjective necessity (as a need of pure reason). Reason is not hereby extended, however, in its theoretical knowledge; the only thing which is different is that the possibility, which was heretofore a problem, now becomes an assertion, and the practical use of reason is thus⁵⁸ connected with the elements of theoretical reason.

It is the moral law then, which reveals the notion of freedom, and it is through the notion of freedom that the 'ideas of God and immortality gain objective reality and legitimacy...' Most crucially, however, it is the now legitimate status of those ideas which provides the basis for the bridge which Kant wishes to construct between man and nature. Pure reason, it will be recalled, was limited in its possible employment to the sensible realm, the realm of nature. But if through the use of practical reason, which when considered in conjunction with pure reason has primacy, the ideas of freedom, God and immortality can be established, then the scope of reason is extended and conceptual completion attained without violating either the epistemic limitations of theoretical reason or the integrity of the natural order. This is apparent when one looks more closely at the precise content of Kant's moral faith, for it is moral faith which allows this conceptually delicate maneuver to proceed.

Kant's theory of moral faith does not make its first appearance in the second Critique. In 1766, Kant concluded his Dreams of a Ghost-seer, illustrated by Dream of Metaphysic with a plea for a 'moral faith which in its

simplicity can raise us above many subtleties of reasoning, and which alone is suitable to man in whatever condition he may be, as leading him,...to the true ends of his being.'⁵⁹ Again, in a letter of April, 1775, to Lavater who had asked for an evaluation of his own work on faith and prayer. Kant notes that:

By 'moral faith' I mean the unconditional trust in divine aid, in achieving all the good that, even with our most sincere efforts, lies beyond our power. Anyone can be convinced of the correctness and necessity of moral faith, once it is made clear to him. The auxiliary historical devices are not necessary for this, even if some individuals would in fact not have reached this insight without the historical revelation.⁶⁰

But despite these earlier references, the first 'systematic' treatment of the notion of moral faith occurs in the second Critique. Part of the difficulty of understanding this idea is that Kant expected it to perform a variety of tasks in resolving the tensions of the critical philosophy, especially the central problem of the nature-man relationship, yet he nowhere pulled all of the elements of the idea together. However, in the second Critique we come closest to a systematic treatment of this crucial idea.

Moral faith, according to Kant, arises in response to two closely related problems. First, there is the intellectual-aesthetic problem, suggested in the Dialectic of the Critique of Pure Reason, that the human mind inevitably seeks the completion, the totality, the pure rational knowledge which can provide the unconditional ground for our cognitive system, but this desire is thwarted

by the limitation of knowledge to the sensible world. As a result, the apex of our cognitive system is left empty.

Second, there is the moral problem that the highest good, the commensurability of morality and happiness, is decidedly problematic in a natural world which is beyond the control of rational beings acting in accordance with the moral law.

Happiness is the condition of a rational being in the world, in whose whole existence everything goes according to wish and will. It thus rests on the harmony of nature with his entire end and with the essential determining ground of his will. But the moral law commands as a law of freedom through motives wholly independent of nature and of its harmony with our faculty of desire (as incentives). Still, the acting rational being in the world is not at the same time the cause of the world and of nature itself. Hence there is not the slightest ground in the moral law for a necessary connection between the morality and proportionate happiness of a being which belongs to the world as one of its parts and as thus dependent on it. Not being nature's cause, his will cannot by its own strength bring nature, as it touches on his happiness, into complete harmony with his practical principles.⁶¹

In both instances moral faith arises out of man's as yet unsatisfactory relationship to nature; in the first instance nature's limitation of knowledge within the bounds of sense and in the second instance the disjunction between natural and moral purposes.

In response to these twin problems, moral faith

...is the moral attitude of reason as to belief in that which is unattainable by theoretical cognition. It is therefore the permanent principle of the mind to assume as true on account of the obligation in reference to it, that which is necessary to presuppose as condition of the highest final purpose, although its possibility or impossibility be alike impossible for us to see into.⁶²

Moral faith, then, originating in the nature-man tension, and justified by the primacy of practical reason, resolves

that tension through allowing belief in the following assertions: (1) the postulates of freedom, immortality and God fill the cognitive apex thus preventing intellectual despair, assuring the ultimate commensurability of morality and happiness and making morality possible; (2) man either is or may be perceived as both a natural phenomenon and a moral noumenon and as such is capable of freedom conceived of as spontaneity; (3) there is from a regulative, if not from a constitutive perspective, a compatibility of natural and human ends through nature's preparation of man for his final end which makes moral effort worth while and existential despair inappropriate; (4) God's divine assistance is available to 'supplement our efforts and supply the good that is not in our power.'⁶³ In some sense it is inaccurate to characterize these assertions as Kant's moral faith in that the motivation for such faith arises only partly from what may be termed moral reasons. While the characterization of a moral faith is appropriate considering the assertions are urged on the moral grounds of being able to believe in the commensurability of morality and happiness and the possibility of the moral enterprise succeeding in the natural world, it is inappropriate in the sense that a 'moral' faith is also suggested on the basis of the aesthetic-intellectual need for a completed cognitive system. Thus a moral faith is simultaneously an antidote for moral and intellectual despair.

But the term moral faith is perhaps inaccurate as well in that the faith assertions relate not exclusively to one's performance of morally good actions. But to the divine assistance which makes such moral actions possible. Moral faith then is a short-hand for a cluster of moral, aesthetic, intellectual and religious assertions which together are foundational to Kant's anthropology. Now not all of these assertions are developed in the second Critique; assertion three, which hinges on a natural teleology not yet argued for, and assertion four, which growing out of the problem of radical evil relates to the entire problematic character of rational, moral faith, are both merely hinted at here in anticipation of a fuller treatment in the final stage of Kant's resolution of the nature-man problem. Nonetheless, it is this moral faith, even in embryo form, which provides Kant's most richly suggestive solution to the nature-man problem on which his anthropology centres.

V

The result then, of Kant's second attempt at solving the problem of man is both a bifurcation of man and nature, and a suggested reconciliation through the concepts of supersensuous nature, the moral law-natural law analogy, and a moral faith. But even while pursuing the hesitant overtures of reconciliation found within the first and second Critiques, Kant was fashioning in his historical,

political and religious works, and in the Critique of Judgment, a third strategy for solving the nature-man problem. It is a strategy which is unusually difficult to articulate, as it is at once straightforward and subtle. Conceived straightforwardly it appears as an amalgam of two quite common Enlightenment tactics for dealing with the man-nature problem: subsuming nature under the category of human purposiveness, or declaring the relationship outside the adjudicating competence of human reason. Viewed subtly, Kant's strategy is more complex, more varied, and perhaps more confused, than either of these two standard Enlightenment options. Whereas the second strategy first dichotomized and then tentatively reunited man and nature through the ideas of super-sensuous nature, moral law, and moral faith, the third strategy charts a synthesis through nature, even understood mechanistically, contributing to man's final end as ordered by God, and made possible through divine grace and justification. The third strategy -- understood, then, as a moral teleology -- is really a development of the third and fourth propositions of the moral faith.

While Kant first outlined the third strategy in his Idea for a Universal History With Cosmopolitan Intent (1784) and the Conjectural Beginning of Human History (1786), the most suggestive and also most problematic development of his third strategy for reconciling nature and man within the context of moral faith occurs in the Critique of Judgment

(1790) and Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone (1793). Whereas in the first Critique Kant had argued that science could, at least in principle, predict all human actions, and that all of the natural world, including man, could be conceptualized only under the concept of mathematical law, and whereas in the second Critique Kant had suggested that man was in some sense outside the natural order and could only be understood purposively under the concepts of rational, moral law, Kant in the third Critique and in Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone argues that nature, to be truly understandable and coherent, may need to be conceived within the context of finality or purposiveness in a way analogous to human purposiveness. Purposiveness thus becomes a category uniting man and nature.

Kant's teleology of man and nature in the third Critique hinges on a distinction between external and internal purposiveness. External purposiveness is found in the existence of one material or organism solely for the sake of another. Traditionally this sort of purposiveness has been attributed to the entire animate and inanimate world in relation to man. The employment of the concept of external purposiveness, however, must always, Kant suggests, be hypothetical for at least two reasons. First, the uses to which organisms which exist simply for other organisms are put are by definition external to themselves and thus tell us nothing about their origin. Adaptation to the ends

of other organisms may thus be accidental rather than designed. Second, organisms existing solely for other organisms cannot be construed as purposeful creations of nature, unless the organisms for which they exist can be so conceived. But such a characterization would imply the elaboration of all of the causal if not the purposive relationships of the natural world, something which is in principle impossible.

But if external purposiveness is a hypothetical category, what of internal purposiveness? This concept, Kant argues, arises immediately from our involvement in the material world with organisms in which all the parts are reciprocally ends and means. Plants, for instance, display an internal purposiveness in that they contain both their own causes and effects. Root, stem and leaf are reciprocally dependent in that each is both a cause of the plant's vitality and an effect of it. This sort of purposiveness, Kant suggested, is impossible to explain on purely naturalistic, mechanistic grounds.

It is indeed quite certain that we cannot adequately cognize, much less explain, organized beings and their internal possibility according to mere mechanical principles of nature, and we can say boldly it is alike certain that it is absurd for men to make any such attempt or hope that another Newton will arise in future who shall make comprehensible by us the production of a blade of grass according to natural laws which no design has ordered.⁶⁹

We are thus at an impasse reminiscent of the first Critique, in that for equally compelling conceptual reasons, we are seemingly forced to subscribe to contradictory

propositions. In this case, both the mechanistic and teleological principles seem necessary for a coherent explanation of nature, yet, as the first two Critiques have demonstrated, these principles are incompatible. Conceived of mechanistically, effects follow regularly from causes, and one entity cannot be both cause and effect. Conceived of teleologically, ideas, which are inherently different from causes, determine the function and organization of an organism, and objects may simultaneously be construed as both causes and effects. Science demands mechanism as its principle for interpreting nature, but reason suggests the intellectual inadequacy of purely mechanical explanations.

This conflict is not, however, the one of the first and second Critiques, which argued that a mechanistic interpretation of the entire natural world was inimical to man's moral interests. Here the conflict centres strictly on the intellectually most comprehensive manner of understanding the world. 'That crude matter should have originally formed itself according to mechanical laws, that life should have sprung from the nature of what is lifeless, that matter should have been able to dispose itself into the form of a self-maintaining purposiveness--this...[is] contradictory to reason.'⁶⁵

Kant resolves this antinomy in two ways. First, he distinguishes between principles functioning in a regulative and a constitutive manner. The principle of mechanistic explanation has a categorical necessity in the sense that it

is necessary for us to have any experience at all. The principle of teleological explanation has a subjective necessity in the sense that without it, reason cannot adequately account for nature as a whole. Here then is a further development in Kant's argument about the necessary conditions for experience. Without understanding the world in terms of a unified system exhibiting purposiveness in the widest sense, that is to say without adopting the principle of teleological explanation, experience, even with the categories, lacks any comprehensive explanation; appearing as nothing more than a series of finally irreducible contingencies. Human nature is, however, so constituted that it resists this natural opacity demanding, in Heidegger's phrase, to know why something exists rather than nothing. Thus if some necessary as opposed to contingent account of the world is to be obtained, an account which satisfies the demands of human reason through knitting together persons and nature in to one vast but nonetheless ordered whole, it will only be through reason's simultaneous employment of both mechanistic and teleological principles. Both principles are regulative or heuristic, and constitutive of the natural world. Applied to the inorganic world, the principle of mechanistic explanation functions constitutively, while applied to the organic world it is merely regulative. Conversely, the teleological principle, when brought to bear on the organic world, functions constitutively, while when applied to the inorganic world it

is simply regulative. Thus we are enjoined to approach nature on the assumption that the world can be completely explicated along mechanical lines, but when we find this approach inadequate, as we must for organisms, we must resort to teleological explanations.

Second, opting for an "idealistic" standpoint consistent with the position of the first two Critiques, Kant suggests that both mechanistic and teleological explanation must be referred to a supersensuous ground which is completely inaccessible to the theoretical reason, though not to practical reason.

The principle which should render possible the compatibility of both in judging of nature must be placed in that which lies outside both...but yet contains their ground, i.e., in the supersensible; and each of the two methods of explanation must be referred thereto.⁶⁶

Having once acknowledged the possibility of natural purposiveness, Kant must now account for its source. While 'men have tried either lifeless matter or a lifeless God, or again living matter or a living God'⁶⁷ as the source of nature's purposiveness, none of these explanations is adequate. At most we can affirm that nature is in some sense purposive, but we cannot affirm anything about the source or precise nature of this purposiveness. Nature is thus not invested with human qualities, in the formal sense in that the concept of finality is merely regulative, within the meaning of the first Critique, and not constitutive.

But despite these careful hedges, Kant had gotten all that he desired, for even while refusing to account for

nature on the hypothesis of a living God, in allowing the regulative conception of nature as purposive, and in referring the entire question of mechanical vs. teleological explanation to the court of the supersensuous, Kant has allowed room for a moral faith to believe that despite the sometimes contrary appearances, there is indeed a compatibility of natural and human purposes.

Kant, however, is not yet satisfied with the shape of this solution, for in a long appendix, 'Theory of the Method of Applying the Teleological judgment', he draws together in one synthesis the notions of historical progress, moral man as nature's end, and a moral faith as the final answer to the nature-man problem. Kant summarized there the argument first introduced in the Idea about nature's progressive development of man's capacities. His conclusion there, however, was radically different. In the Idea and the Conjectural Beginning man's purposes and powers were developed through nature's assistance, but within the context of nature. Nature's purpose, even in its seeming hostility or indifference, was to force man's development as a rational, purposeful, free rational being. But man, even when fully rational and moral, was yet within the natural world.

Echoes of these themes are certainly present in the appendix, but the dominant emphasis is on nature's preparation of man for a higher, final end. Here then, Kant quite explicitly develops the third premise of a moral

faith, that the natural world is ordered in such a manner as to make man's 'final end' possible. 'Nature strives on purposive lines to give us that education that opens the door to higher ends than it can itself afford.'⁶⁸ 'To find the end of the real existence of nature itself, we must look beyond nature...'⁶⁹ The end beyond nature yet, still, paradoxically within nature is moral man as 'it is only as a moral being that man can be the final end of creation.'⁷⁰

If things in the world, which are dependent in their existence, need a supreme cause acting toward ends, then man is the final end of creation; for without him the chain of graduated ends would not be perfectly grounded, and only in man (but in him only as subject to morality) is there unconditional legislation with respect to ends. This alone makes him capable of being a final end, to which all nature is teleologically subordinated.

...the final end of creation is such a constitution of the world as harmonizes with what we can only definitely specify according to laws, namely with the final end of our pure practical reason...Now, by virtue of the moral law which enjoins this final end upon us, we have reason for assuming from a practical point of view, that is for the direction of our energies towards the realization of that end, that it is possible, or, in other words, practicable. Consequently, we are also justified in assuming a nature of things harmonizing with such a possibility...⁷²

On this reading, the nature-man relationship is dialectical. Nature's end is the production of rational beings who freely set and pursue their own purposes, purposes which inevitably take them beyond but never wholly outside of nature. Nature is not so much subsumed under man and his purposive categories, as transcended by man. Man's 'final end' can never occur within nature because that end is 'man regarded as a noumenon...man considered as a moral

agent.'⁷³ Thus both the perception of the regulative idea of nature as preparing man for some future beyond itself, and the belief in man's ultimate transcendence of nature, are justified by a moral faith.

Yet despite these confident assumptions of natural purposiveness, and of the convergence of human and natural purposes, this resolution of the nature-man tension is yet insecure as it is threatened by the fact that man, despite his rational and moral potential, has no guarantee of reaching his final end of transcending nature, because of his limitations as both a sensuous being and an evil being. Man's effort at becoming the 'moral being' which is 'the final end of creation' is thus seemingly blocked, not by external nature but by man's own nature.

Kant, it will be recalled, in his attempt to make sense of persons distinguished between natural behaviour and rational behaviour. Natural behaviour is the behaviour of animals whose instinctive actions are governed by the laws of nature, while rational behaviour is the behaviour of men whose actions are shaped by the moral law. Man's behaviour, which is initially natural behaviour, gradually comes to be a peculiar mixture of both natural and rational behaviour at any given moment. This may be true in the sense that all of man's actions are a peculiar mixture of instinctive and rational elements; or that at one moment man may act instinctively in accordance with his sensuous nature, and at another moment may act morally in accordance with his

rational nature. However construed, man is an amalgam of natural and rational behaviour, and his actions are thus a volatile and often tragic mixture of the instinctive and the rational.

But man's moral end is jeopardized not simply by his natural 'nature' but by radical evil, an evil which students of Kant have frequently but mistakenly grounded in man's sensuous nature. Kant, however, refused to accept this theistic conflation, in that it ultimately subverted any sense of genuine moral responsibility. Man as a sensuous being may well be fallible, but fallibility is not to be equated with evil.

The source of evil cannot lie in an object determining the will through inclination, nor yet in a natural impulse. It can only lie in a ⁷⁴rule made by the will, for the use of its freedom...

Natural inclinations, considered in themselves, are good, that is, not a matter of reproach, and it is not only futile to want to extirpate them ⁷⁵but to do so would also be harmful and blameworthy.

The ground of evil, rather, must be sought in man's misused moral freedom, in his 'wickedness of will'.

Man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is or is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his free choice; for otherwise he could not be held responsible for it and ⁷⁶could therefore be morally neither good nor evil.

Man's task is thus to transcend both his sensuous nature, and thus nature itself, and his evil propensities. But man's task, like reason's conceptual longings, is beyond his powers. Despite the discipline of his desires, and 'a continual progress from bad to better'⁷⁷ the 'propensity to

evil is inextricable,'⁷⁸ as it lies in man's supersensible moral nature. This condition demands first a 'change of heart', 'a kind of rebirth, as it were a new creation.'⁷⁹ But even this 'change of heart' does not, according to Kant, remove the propensity to evil. Righteousness conceived as freedom from the tendency to evil, is reckoned to man only by grace 'so far as man does endeavor with all his power to do the will of God.'⁸⁰

Man's becoming a 'moral being' is thus ultimately contingent on the 'divine supplement' which, affirmed on the basis of moral faith, brings both a change of heart (a disposition to goodness) and freedom from evil (righteousness via grace). As Kant noted earlier:

righteousness is the sum of all religion and that we ought to seek it with all our might, having faith (that is, an unconditional trust) that God will then supplement our efforts and supply the good that is not in our power. This doctrine of faith forbids all our presumptuous curiosity about the manner in which God will do this, forbids the arrogance of supposing that one can know what means would be most in conformity with His wisdom; it forbids, too, all wooing of favor by the performing of rituals that someone has introduced.⁸¹

Kant's teleological solution to the nature-man relationship, a solution which suggests the possibility of man's transcending nature, rests then not on the logical certainties of theoretical reason but on the hope, the moral faith of practical reason. For

from the general assumption that grace will effect in us what nature cannot, provided only we have made the maximum use of our own powers, we will not be able to make any further use of this idea, either as to how (beyond a constant striving after a good life) we might draw down to us its cooperation, or how we might

determine on what occasions to expect it. This idea is
wholly transcendent....⁸²

In this sense we have not so much a 'solution' as a further
elaboration of the tensions with which we began and a
paradoxical counsel to both accept and reject our lot as
rational, moral and decidedly finite beings.

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- ¹⁶ See, for instance, C. Hendel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Moralists (London, Oxford University Press, 1934), II, 165. Also, E. Cassirer, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe: Two Essays. (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1945). While Kant's debt to Rousseau is important, it might also be argued, though with less certainty, that his interest in universal human nature can be traced to Hume as well. There is a striking similarity between Hume's interest in the 'constant and universal principles of human nature' (Enquiry Bk. 1, Sect. viii) which history may disclose and Kant's interest in the 'abiding nature of man.'
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Chapter Two

'KANTIAN MAN: NATURE AND HISTORY'

One cannot suppress a certain indignation when one sees men's actions on the great world-stage and finds, besides the wisdom that appears here and there among individuals, everything in the large woven together from folly, childish vanity, even from childish malice and destructiveness. In the end, one does not know what to think of the human race, so conceited in its gifts.

I

In Chapter One we examined the role of anthropology in Kant's Critical philosophy in an attempt to substantiate our somewhat unconventional claim that the nature of persons is the hermeneutical key to understanding the entire range of Kant's thought.² We argued that from his earliest work to his most mature efforts, Kant is concerned with the ways in which the tension arising from conceiving of persons simultaneously as existing within the natural, determined order and the rational, moral order might be resolved. We suggested that this tension and its resolution was the key to what might unfashionably though justifiably be called Kant's Weltanschauung. Kant's central anthropological claim

thus centres on the fascinating but also saddening ambiguity of persons, who, as he notes, are so compounded of 'wisdom' and 'folly' that one 'does not know what to think of the human race.'

But it is not simply man who appears in this ambiguous fashion, for Kant portrays Nature as well as both sometime liberator and enslaver, as both productive and devoid of value, as simultaneously the arena in which persons discover and indeed make themselves and the realm in which all that is most distinctive and valuable about persons can be lost. This double ambiguity, moreover, is rendered even more troublesome in that Kant nowhere draws together into an ordered and sustained, not to say systematic discussion, the various standards of this anthropology of ambiguity. Rather, he seems content to develop his ideas about so central and crucial an element of his critical philosophy in general and his political theory in particular in a causal, almost occasional fashion in a variety of settings while engaged in quite diverse philosophical tasks. Thus, Perpetual Peace is described as a 'tract' and is suggested to be nothing more than a series of 'views hazarded at random'³, Idea For A Universal History From a Cosmopolitan Point of View (hereafter Idea) is occasioned by a brief news report, and the Conjectural Beginning of Human History is argued to be nothing more than a 'mere pleasure trip.'⁴ The easy temptation is thus to simply dismiss this ambiguity as contradiction, a temptation to which most expositors have

succumbed in attending to Kantian anthropology. We wish, however, to argue that it is precisely this ambiguity which provides the conceptual richness inherent in Kant's conception of persons and at the same time the central theoretical dimension for his political and moral theory, for his theology, and indeed, for his Critical philosophy as a whole. This chapter is an attempt to recover, from a variety of contexts, Kant's understanding of the historical development of persons from their natural origins, a recovery of what we have termed the first conceptual strand of Kantian anthropology.

The place to begin such a reconstruction is with Kant's 1786 essay Conjectural Beginning of Human History (hereafter Conjectural Beginning), for it is here and in the Idea, the Anthropology and also the third Critique that one finds his most sustained discussion of man, and, more precisely, how man historically comes to be the creature he is. This focus on the historical dimensions of Kantian man might seem somewhat odd, especially given Kant's own characterization of his historical works and his aversion to the historical process.⁵ The historical dimension of man, though elaborated only briefly is nonetheless inescapably central to Kant's anthropology. Indeed, it might well be that Kant's most significant debts to Rousseau are not the familiar and often recited ones of an awakened interest in man and the conceptual heist of the notions of inequality and dignity, but rather the recognition that mankind must be

understood at least initially in its historical context. In fact, Kant's entire understanding of history as the tension, the 'inevitable conflict between culture and nature,' of persons as developed within the process of history is self-confessedly an echo of Rousseau.⁶ This is not, of course, to suggest that Kant accepts the details of Rousseau's programme. Rousseau, for instance, insists on beginning the historical process with a natural man while Kant prefers to begin with at least partially civilized man.

Kant begins the essay by attempting to make clear the status of conjecture in history. He suggests that it is entirely legitimate to fill in the gaps in the historical record between established facts because these facts by the nature of causality limit the conjectures which one proposes to the highly probable. This procedure of rounding out the historical record through conjecture - something that Kant believes to be crucial not simply to history itself, but, more importantly, to Critical philosophy's use of history - must however, be sharply distinguished from originating, that is to say, constructing an historical account entirely from conjecture; something that Kant suggests is rather akin to drafting a novel. If one takes this argument seriously however, it would appear as if a conjectural beginning of human history were impossible, precisely because it does not occur as some X to be filled in between two already delineated historical events. Kant counters this argument by suggesting a distinction between what is illegitimate

when attempted with respect to any single historical event within history and what is permissible when applied to the beginning of history itself.⁷ Kant's argument then is that the beginning of human history is 'made by nature'⁸ and experience has shown that nature is consistent through time. Thus one may deduce from man as he is now to be found, what he was in fact at the beginning of history, since 'human actions were in the first beginning no better and no worse than we find them now...'

...But what may not legitimately be ventured with regard to the progression of the history of human actions may be attempted with regard to their first beginning. At least insofar as this beginning is made by nature, one may attempt to establish it, on the basis of pure conjecture. For here one need not resort to fiction but can rely on experience, if only one presupposes that human actions were in the first beginning no better and no worse than we find them now - a presupposition which is according to the analogy of nature and altogether safe. Hence a historical account of the first development of freedom from its original predisposition in human nature is something altogether different from an account of the progression of freedom.

The centrepiece of this 'conjectural beginning' is thus the development of freedom, the development of freedom from its origin in nature throughout the course of history. Kant, of course, does not thus wish to suggest that man is socially, culturally or intellectually the same now as he was in the past, though despite his emphasis on the development of freedom this might be implied in his argument. The clue to which actions or capacities have remained constant is found in the words 'no better and no worse.' It is man's moral nature which appears to have remained constant, at least

after its initial debut. But this assertion about historical and more particularly moral constancy is puzzling for at least two reasons. First, it is an implicit if not explicit rejection of the Biblical account of man's origins, an account which argues for a radical disjunction between man's nature prior to and subsequent to the Fall and an account that Kant professes to use as a 'map' for his account. Second, these claims are somewhat confusing in that they appear to suggest that the enterprise that for Kant is so crucial in the development of man as he should be, namely the formation and cultivation of a moral sense with all that this implies in terms of rationality and freedom, is a failure. If man's actions are 'in the first beginning no better and no worse than we find them now' it is difficult to see how for Kant's purposes history can offer any optimistic answers to the question What may I hope? Indeed, we seem to find in this pessimistic assessment of the development of freedom that our worst worries about the rationality of moral faith are confirmed and that we are justified in construing human ambiguity in the most dubious light. Hence at the very outset of the Kantian account of man and his development one is confronted with the central problem of the uncertainty, the ambiguity of moral progress.

Having justified the use of conjecture with regard to the beginnings of human history on the basis of the analogy of nature, Kant nonetheless hedges his account in two further respects. First, he suggests that conjectures

cannot in any sense be taken too seriously as they are undertaken as nothing more than a mental restorative, and second, he notes that the reader might check his conjectures against a history which reports the same events as an actually recorded occurrence, namely, Holy Writ.¹⁰ The philosophical reconstruction of human origins, a reconstruction employing, as Kant notes, concepts, a reconstruction that is at best a conjecture, is nevertheless coincidental with the allegedly factual and less intellectual account of the same history recorded in Scripture. This latter claim of the parallel structures of the secular and divine accounts of human history serves to at least undermine if not completely discount Kant's own reservations about the conceptual status of conjectural history, particularly his comments that such conjectures 'cannot announce themselves as serious business.'¹¹ In fact Kant appears to believe that the conceptual account which he offers is not simply the more interesting, but quite possibly the more accurate.

Where then does philosophy in its conceptual posture begin with man? Kant argues that unless one is to engage in totally irresponsible conjectures, philosophy must begin with man as already existent, and moreover, existent in a particular fashion.

Unless one is to indulge in irresponsible conjectures, one must start out with something which human reason cannot derive from prior natural causes - in the present case, the existence of man. Moreover, it must be man as an adult, because he must get along without the help of a mother; it must be a pair, in order that

he may perpetuate his kind; and it must be a single pair....I put this pair into a place secure against the attack of wild beasts, a place richly endowed by nature with all means of nourishment and blessed with a perpetually mild climate, hence a garden, as it were. What is still more, I begin with this pair, not in the natural state with all its crudeness, but rather after it has already taken mighty steps in the skillful use of its powers.... The first man, then was able to stand and walk; he could speak... and even discourse, i.e. speak according to coherent concepts..., and hence think. These are all skills which he had to acquire for himself....But I take him as already in possession of these skills. For my sole purpose is to consider the development of manners and morals in his way of life,¹² and these already presuppose the skills referred to.

Coming so soon upon his own claim that the sacred and philosophical accounts of human origin would coincide this is a strange assertion. Kant might well assume that inasmuch as he has chosen to use Scripture as his map for man's development it is implicit that man exists as God's creation. Yet he does not make any direct use of the Biblical account of the creation of either man or the world. Instead, philosophy must apparently remain silent about man's origins and Kant begins the account of man with an already existent human pair. In one sense, however, this is not so odd as it might initially appear in light of the first Critique's structures about the illegitimate philosophical employment of the concept of God. If philosophy cannot provide us with compelling reasons for belief in the existence of God then it obviously cannot with any consistency root man's existence in some creative act of divine omnipotence. But in another sense, this silence about man's origins is very odd, for Kant does not bring man

into the world ex nihilo. From his conception man shares with other animals certain instincts, and instincts, Kant notes, are nothing but the voice of God.¹³ Moreover, Kantian man must possess at least the potential of reason, for without it his development as a free and moral creature is impossible. Again, Kant argues that the history of nature is good inasmuch as it is the work of God and thus since man is both the product of nature and of freedom he must, even if only in a limited sense, also derive from God's hand.

Is Kant then simply confused or careless in appearing to affirm implicitly what he seems to deny explicitly as beyond philosophy's reach? We would suggest that he is neither confused nor careless but ambivalent, ambivalent for a variety of reasons about the origins of persons. For one thing, he is undecided, despite his elaborate talk of its factual character, about the historical veracity of the Biblical account. Moreover, he is reluctant, within a philosophical account of man's origin, to trace man's beginning to a being whose philosophical status is conceptually suspect. This reluctance is balanced by the fact that God is an illegitimate concept only within the bounds of theoretical reason, the employment of the concept being allowed, Kant believes, within the realm of practical reason. Where, for instance, does history most nearly fit, within the epistemological rigour of the structures of possible experience or in the more flexible fabric of

social, moral and political experience? Finally, Kant's ambivalence about man's origins is occasioned it would seem by his unwillingness to be bound in his account of human nature by the full implications of the Biblical account. Kant appears quite willing to make use of the Biblical affirmation of Imago Dei in its positive sense of explicating man's nature by recourse to God's nature as this provides a very convenient solution as to how man comes to have the potential for reason, freedom and morality. But he is at the same time unwilling, at least at this point, to accept the negative implications of this notion of persons as reflecting divinity, that is the corruption of man's cognitive and moral powers in the Fall. Thus man is God's creature in the sense that his nature is an approximation, even if somewhat remote, of the divine character, while at the same time he is not God's fallen creature in the sense that his ethical relationship to God has not been structured and determined by a supernaturally initiated moral impairment. In one way then Kant's entire treatment of the problem of evil in man (see Chapter Four) is a delicate attempt to allow for some relationship of correspondence between divine and human nature and do justice to the empirically substantiated impairment in man's moral capacities, while all the while avoiding attributing to man the inevitable fallenness and corruption which Christianity has insisted is intrinsic, subsequent to the Fall, to man's nature.

Philosophy then begins with man already in existence, and while formally it is allowed to say nothing as to the source of persons, informally it can rely on a suitably abridged account of divine creation. Thus Kant, for instance, while accepting that man's existence cannot be deduced from prior natural causes, nonetheless seeks to provide arguments as to why human history begins with a single adult pair. Philosophy's arguments, its conceptual path thus coincides while yet supplementing the Biblical narrative.

Man, however, appears to be existing as much more than an animal, as he exists 'not in the natural state with all its crudeness',¹⁴ but with a considerable array of concepts and powers, all of which he has acquired for himself. Nature has then already propelled man along the path of development to some not inconsiderable degree. Most important, not surprisingly, of these powers is the ability to think or reason which contra the Biblical account, Kant suggests was not something with which man entered the world but something which developed subsequent to a more primitive state in which man was apparently guided by 'instinct alone'. The advent of reason, however important to Kant's conception of personhood, is not an unalloyed good. Indeed, Kant rather surprisingly traces man's loss of his original well-being directly to the initial promptings of reason. No more does reason appear, than the human story takes a marked turn - at least to begin with - for the worse. Kant thus

draws an important contrast between man guided by instinct, which is the voice of God, man secure and well within the confines of the original natural order, and man, prompted by reason, moving, admittedly awkwardly at first, in opposition to instinct beyond the boundary of nature into the realm of freedom with all of its attendant uncertainties and perplexities. Man, of course, does not so much depart nature in his origins so much as press against its limitations.

The occasion for this movement from instinct to reason lies in a conjunction of sense and thought. "Sight-presented other food than that normally consumed as similar to it; and reason, instituting a comparison, sought to enlarge its knowledge of foodstuffs beyond the bounds of instinctual knowledge."¹⁵ Reason, then at the very advent of human history is something that seeks to transcend the boundaries -whether physical or cognitive which confine it. In fact, it is this urge to transcendence which might well be reason's most essential characteristic in that it symbolizes for Kant freedom in all of its dimensions, that is not merely freedom from the motivations of the sensuous inclinations but freedom as objectivity, the freedom that comes from transcending the limitations inherent in subjective egocentricity. This experiment, Kant suggests, might not have ended badly if reason had simply acted in the service of instinct. But reason 'has this peculiarity that, aided by the imagination, it can create

artificial desires which are not only unsupported by natural instinct but actually contrary to it.'¹⁶ Man's corruption is thus not a product of his instinctual nature, either in the sense of evil instincts prevailing or good instincts somehow perverted, but instead of reason's creation of artificial desires, reason's 'violence to the voice of nature.'¹⁷ Thus here, at the origin of personhood, it appears that man's most characteristic capacity plays a decidedly ambiguous moral role.

But to speak of reason's corruption is perhaps misleading, for Kant does not portray reason's movement beyond instinctual nature as something with inevitably lamentable consequences. Reason's presumption moved man beyond the limits to which all animals are confined' and as such 'its effect was very important and indeed decisive for his future way of life.'¹⁸ Reason's ignoring the voice of nature awakens within man freedom, the realization that he possessed a 'power of choosing for himself a way of life, of not being bound without alternative to a single way, like the animals.'¹⁹ What this newly awakened sense of freedom also does is to bring man 'anxiety and alarm.' 'He stood...at the brink of an abyss' for he can no longer rely on instinct and yet he cannot return to the 'subjection of instinct.'

Until that moment instinct had directed him toward specific objects of desire. But from these there now opened up an infinity of such objects, and he did not yet know how to choose between them. On the other hand, it was impossible for him to return to the state

of servitude (i.e., subjection to instinct) from the state of freedom, once he had tasted the latter.²⁰

Freedom then originates in reason's direction of desire from the naturally directed, the specific and the instinctive to the general and unconditioned. Moreover, this freedom, once experienced, cannot be easily abrogated, if at all, for it becomes man's inevitable destiny.

This assertion, however, which provides the conceptual foundation for the entire critical philosophy, is curiously enough unargued. Kant simply asserts, as if it were uncontroversial, that 'it was impossible for him to return to the state of servitude...from the state of freedom once he had tasted the latter.'²¹

In the future, the wretchedness of his condition would often arouse in him the wish for a paradise, the creation of his imagination, where he could dream or while away his existence in quiet inactivity and permanent peace. But between him and that imagined place of bliss, restless reason would interpose itself, irresistibly impelling him to develop the faculties implanted within him. It would not permit him to return to that crude and simple state from which it had driven him to begin with.... It would make him take up patiently the toil which he yet hates, and pursue the frippery which he despises.²²

But it is not at all obvious why this should be the case. Given the sense of security and well-being which Kant himself allows was man's natural state, and given the "anxiety and alarm", the sense of standing on the "brink of an abyss" brought about by reason's transcendence over instinct why would man opt for freedom? Indeed, given that man on Kant's own admission did not "yet know either the secret properties or the remote effects of anything"²³, that

is man lacked both foresight and science, and given that man's first experiment in freedom had produced an unexpected, and according to the Biblical account a most unwelcome result, would not reason itself counsel a return to instinct and unfreedom?

Kant might reply to this argument in a variety of ways. In the first instance he might suggest that the discovery of freedom produced a "moment of delight" which compensated for the "anxiety and alarm" at leaving the world of instinct. But founding freedom and via freedom, man's moral nature on a calculation of utility, seems to contradict the at least formal intentions of Kant's ethical theory. In the second instance he might argue that man's choice of freedom is itself instinctual. This would necessitate a distinction between natural and supernatural or perhaps transcendental instincts with the transcendental instinct of freedom being conceptually primitive and insusceptible to further elucidation. This would have the paradoxical effect of making man a creature of choice while denying him the capacity to choose whether to be such a creature, in effect, forcing him to be free. Kant seems to take this stance, which is quite similar to the orthodox Christian account of man's freedom, occasionally.

In the third instance Kant might suggest that man's choice of freedom is occasioned by nature, or, more ambiguously, by Providence. Kant, for all of his formal reservations about the validity of the concept of the unity

or purpose of nature, is quite willing to speak of nature as a process which quite deliberately brings about the cultural, intellectual, social and moral development of mankind. Thus man's commitment to freedom might be a consequence of nature's cunning. It is difficult to see, however, how given the epistemological constraints on teleological explanation nature can legitimately function in this sort of way without simply collapsing into an all too transparent facade for divine action.

In the fourth instance Kant might argue that the nature of reason is such that it is impossible to be rational without being free. Kant, indeed appears to suggest that reason does 'violence to the voice of nature' by making 'the first attempt at a free choice.'²⁴ To be rational in the Kantian sense is to be able, if only in a quite minimal sense, to deliberate, to choose between alternatives, and it is precisely this capacity to act contrary to his instinctual urgings that natural man lacked. Thus for Kant, freedom is rationality, free beings are rational beings--at least where rationality is read in a fairly minimal sense -- for freedom is in the end the capacity to be rational in the sense of perceiving and choosing courses of action independently of and indeed, in many instances, in opposition to 'instinct', whether physical or psychological.

This notion of man as rational and therefore free, is not, as we shall see, a casually formulated speculation appropriate only to a conjectural account of the origins of

human history. It is an idea, rather, which in a variety of guises, is central to the critical philosophy, and more particularly, to Kant's social and political philosophy. Kant himself emphasizes the importance of rationality and freedom in his remark on the first section of the Conjectural Beginning where he notes that

man's departure from that paradise which his reason represents as the first abode of his species was nothing but the transition from an uncultured, merely animal condition to the state of humanity, from bondage to instinct to rational control--in a word,²⁵ from the tutelage of nature to the state of freedom.

The problem of human history is the problem of freedom, and the problem of freedom can be resolved only within the confines of reason.

All of this is, of course, a substantial departure from Kant's official text, the Biblical account. Both Kant and Scripture agree that reason preceded moral knowledge, but they disagree as to what shaped man's behaviour in that pre-moral state. Kant, as we have noted, insists that man was guided by instinct alone, that voice of God which is obeyed by all animals.²⁶ The Bible, however, asserts that Adam's actions were governed by God's commandment forbidding him to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. If one were to leave aside the threat of death for disobedience, these two accounts could indeed be reconciled. In both instances man actions are determined by the voice of God: Kant suggests that this is internalized while Scripture appears to suggest through the connexion of the serpent with Eve that it is an external promulgation. The fact that the

Biblical account specifies a punishment for disobedience argues, however, that man's behaviour is not merely instinctive, that there is the capacity within man of reflection and choice, albeit primitive, between good and evil for which Kant's account does not, at this point allow. The differences then are far from trivial, and Kant's 'alleged' use of the Biblical account disguises rather than illuminates them. In the Biblical account man arrives in the world a moral creature, distinguished in this respect from animals. As a moral creature, man already possesses reason and foresight, he can understand God's commandments, he can perceive the connexion between certain actions (disobedience) and certain consequences (death), he has a set of values, and he obviously fears death and values life or God's commandment and threatened punishment would be meaningless.

For the Bible, then, man from the beginning as God's creature, is rational, moral, free and responsible. But for Kant the situation is quite different. Man does not begin life as a moral creature, in any but the most potential sense. Man's earliest actions as instinctual are devoid of moral import. It is only with the development of reason and with reason freedom, that man begins the task of becoming a moral agent. The Biblical account affirms that man the distinctive moral and spiritual being, began history with God's own commendation of "good." This status is lost, but not irrevocably, in man's disobedience. Biblical history

begins not with a natural being whose moral capabilities are not yet fully realized but with a moral being whose informed choice brings disastrous consequences. Biblical history then is the history of God's attempts to redeem man's moral capacities, to reclaim man's status as a moral being. The Kantian account affirms that man is first and foremost a natural being whose instinctive acts cannot be construed as either good or bad. Natural man's first attempt at becoming moral man has unforeseen and unfortunate consequences in terms of any given individual, but at the same time it has potentially beneficial consequences for the species.

Biblical man and Kantian man are thus both Post-Edenic, but in fundamentally different senses. The history of Biblical man is the history of man's attempts to return to Eden. The history of Kantian man is the history of man's attempts to realize his unique rational and moral capacities in a world which is either hostile or indifferent to his presence. While the shape of the former is reasonably predictable in that it is constrained by certain non-variables such as God's nature and purpose and man's moral character as a reflection of the image of God, the latter, as Kant never tires of noting, is much more problematic. Whereas sacred history assures one that God's purposes for man will ultimately triumph, Kant is decidedly less confident of both man's nature and purposes.

Thus far Kant has spoken of simply the first step in man's history and the development of reason, which at least

at the beginning of history are precisely the same. Reason developed first in connexion with man's most fundamental instinct, the desire for food. Reason takes its second step with the second of man's instinctual or animal traits, the sexual instinct. Kant suggests that whereas in animals "sexual attraction is merely a matter of transient, mostly periodic impulse"²⁷ in man this animal attraction can be fundamentally changed through reason's employment of the imagination. Kant does not account for the origin of imagination other than to note that it is a power, part of reason, "which carries on its business...the more moderately but at once also the more constantly and uniformly, the more the object is removed from the senses."²⁸ Reason, it should be observed is still very much simply the facilitator of desire. Imagination heightens and extends desire from its transient animal nature by removing the object of desire from the senses to the intellect. As long as desire is a product merely of the senses, Kant argues, it will be, as in the case of animals, transient. The fig leaf then is "manifestation of reason"²⁹ for it removes desire from the senses to the imagination, though reason's act is presumably in response to desire. Desire is not, it should be noted, eliminated, it is merely made more constant and orderly. But the fig leaf signifies more than the imaginative manipulation of sexual instinct, it also has a moral importance in that it demonstrates reason's emancipation from instinct.

The fig leaf...was a far greater manifestation of reason than that shown in the earlier stage of development. For the one shows merely a power to chose the extent to which to serve impulse; but the other...already reflects consciousness of a certain degree of mastery of reason over impulse.³⁰

This emancipation is characterized by reason's refusal to be dominated by the merely sensual, and it is this refusal Kant, argues, that allows for the development of the more spiritual attractions, love and ultimately beauty, both human and natural. 'Refusal was the feat which brought about the passage from merely sensual to spiritual attractions, from mere animal desire gradually to love, and along with this from the feeling of the merely agreeable to a taste for beauty, at first only for beauty in man but at length for beauty in nature as well...³¹ But important as these developments are, they are not the most crucial consequences of reason's emerging mastery over desire, for 'in addition, there came a first hint of the development of man as a moral creature.³² The fig leaf then signifies also the advent of morality which Kant sees here as the capacity to act motivated by respect for the moral law - even if dimly perceived - rather than from the incentives of sensuous nature. Personhood, which begins in the 'power of choosing...a way of life' now develops this capacity of ordering itself by curtailing nature's dominion through the subjection of impulse to reason.

In all of this there is at least a superficial symmetry between the Kantian and Biblical accounts in that both link the consciousness of physical nakedness with moral

awakening. Here, however, the connexion between the two narratives ends. The Biblical account appears to imply (vs. 10-11) that this aroused physical consciousness is in some sense linked to moral disquiet in that prior to the Serpent's temptation Adam and Eve are described as unashamed of their nakedness. Kant, though, does not portray the fig leaf so much as a symbol of sin and shame as of decency and respect, indeed, as the first sign of moral consciousness. Man as a moral creature 'came from the sense of decency, which is the inclination to inspire others to respect by proper manners, i.e., by concealing all that which might arouse low esteem.'³³ Morality is thus closely related to love and beauty in that it represents a concealment, in this instance a concealment of all that might prove offensive to fellow persons. But while it is concealing, it is a hiding with a very different motivation from the concealment of sensuality. Man conceals his sex so that he might through the imagination prolong and enhance his sexuality, but he conceals himself so as to occasion respect in others. Whereas the one action is motivated by reason's shaping of but yet accommodating desire, and is thus part natural and part rational man, the other is motivated purely by rational considerations in that respect cannot be comprehended but through reason. Morality, then, it appears, is in its origin a sense of decency which at bottom is nothing more than a consideration of the sensibilities of others - which are assumed to be like one's own - motivated by a desire for

their respect. Kant is careful to note that this is not all that morality is, it is merely the 'first hint at the development of man as a moral creature.'³⁴ Nonetheless even in its first primitive manifestation, it is clear that morality displays all of its typically Kantian characteristics in that it is conjoined with both reason and respect, and, to some extent love. Animals, Kant implicitly suggests, cannot have a sense of shame. Shame or 'low esteem' is rather an affliction or perhaps less prejudicially, a capacity of rational man, and thus the desire to avoid shame, the craving for respect leads, if only for egotistic reasons, to a consideration of the interests of others. The person who refuses to cover his sex indicates that reason has not yet mastered impulse, that he still lives on the level of nature and animal desire rather than on that of imagination, love and beauty. Respect then in conjunction with reason can generate morality precisely because it can exist only in a reciprocal fashion: in order to have the respect of other agents one's behaviour must in some very minimal sense conform to their expectations. A community of rational beings in which each seeks to have the respect of every other cannot but be other than a community of beings who respect and thus to some degree act ethically toward their neighbours. At this point respect is still conceptually and no doubt empirically minimal, but it clearly carries for Kant the possibility of developing into the fully developed conception of respect for persons as

absolute ends. Hence in respect 'lies the real basis of all true sociability.'³⁵

Thus far man's two most distinctive capacities, reason and with reason freedom and the moral sense, have while all the time carrying man away from the natural world nevertheless been initiated through what Kant describes as man's two most foundational instincts - the instinct for food and the sexual instinct. In this sense the ambiguity of the natural and human orders and their inter-relationship is even more apparent in that, Kant suggests, man's distinctiveness as a person, indeed, the emergence of the personal world itself as something conceptually distinct from the natural order, can develop only as is initiated by his natural instincts.

This is seen as well in reason's 'third step' at the beginning of human history in which reason develops a 'conscious expectation of the future.'³⁶ In one sense this must have already been present in reason's mastery of sexual impulse, in that Kant suggests that this involved a refusal of immediate in favour of delayed gratification. Now, however, this 'capacity for facing up in the present to the often very distant future, instead of being wholly shaped by the enjoyment of the present',³⁷ is generalized across the entire range of early man's experience. And it is this ability of foresight 'which is the most decisive mark of the human's advantage.'

It enables man to prepare himself for distant aims according to his role as a human being. But at the

same time it is also the most inexhaustible source of cares and troubles, aroused by the uncertainty of his future - cares and troubles, of which animals are altogether free....Man, compelled to support himself, his wife and his future children, foresaw the ever-increasing hardships of labor. Woman foresaw the troubles to which nature had subjected her sex, and those additional ones to which man, a being stronger than she, would subject her. Both foresaw with fear - in the background of the picture and at the end of a troublesome life - that which, to be sure, inexorably strikes all animals without, however, causing them care, namely, death. And they apparently foresaw and decried as a crime the use of reason, which had been the cause of all these ills.³⁸

Instinctual life, like the life of animals, is distinguished primarily by the fact that it occurs only in the context of the present being entirely devoid of foresightfulness. And man's early life in the Garden, dominated as it was by instinct, could, Kant argues, have been nothing other than instinctual. The expulsion from the Garden, and the pronouncement of woes do more than condemn man to a life 'east of Eden' in the sense of a life marked not merely by moral but physical evil, but to existence in which the certainties of instinct - both conceptual, which is perhaps the most important, and physical, are forever lost and in which man must exercise foresight in order to survive. Kant does not disguise the unfortunate character of this new dimension of existence - particularly with respect to its consciousness, for the first time, apparently, of death, but also with respect to the abandonment of reason. It is this refusal to use reason, a claim for which Kant provides no textual evidence or indeed even conjectural rationale, which decidedly enhances the already depressing Biblical account.

...Nature had now driven him from the safe and harmless state of childhood - a garden, as it were, which looked after his needs without any trouble on his part...-into the wide world, where so many cares, troubles, and unforeseen ills awaited him. In the future the wretchedness of his condition would often arouse in him the wish for a paradise, the creation of his imagination, where he could dream or while away his existence in quiet inactivity and permanent peace. But between him and that imagined place of bliss, restless reason would interpose itself, irresistibly impelling him to develop the faculties implanted within him.³⁹

Kant's use of Nature here is again ambiguous when placed within the context of the Biblical narrative for it is unclear whether he ascribes man's movement into the 'wide world' as at least in part a product of Nature's agency, something which would diminish considerably human responsibility, or whether man is yet fully accountable in that Nature is to be seen as providing nothing more than the origin of a rational capacity over which it exercises no control. The Biblical account, though acknowledging the Serpent's role in the human fall, and there is some ambivalence here as well as the Serpent seems to be part of the natural order yet at the same time to have rational, and perhaps super-natural qualities (see III.1.), appears to place major responsibility on the original human couple. Kant himself, seems to accept this latter when he notes that the 'individual must consider as his own fault, not only every act of wickedness which he commits, but also all the evils which he suffers...'⁴⁰ What is curious however we read Nature in terms of responsibility for man's altered lot, is this insistence on Kant's part that man leaves not merely the Garden and childhood behind, but reason as well.

Such a claim is inconsistent both with Kant's own conjectural reading, which has seen the progressive enhancement of reason culminating in foresight as something that is inevitable, and with the Scriptural account which follows in that there the cultural achievements of early man - social institutions, language, cities - are pictured as products of reason.

Despite the apparently disastrous consequences of reason's initial employment, Kant nonetheless refuses to read the 'beginning' of human history as tragic, for reason's fourth and undoubtedly most important step which 'raised man altogether above community with animals',⁴¹ is that he comes to understand 'however obscurely, that he is the true end of nature, and that nothing that lives on earth can compete with him in this regard'.⁴²

The first time he ever said to the sheep, "nature has given you the skin you wear for my use, not for yours"; the first time he ever took that skin and put it upon himself...-that time he became aware of the way in which his nature privileged and raised him above all animals. And from then on he looked upon them, no longer as fellow creatures, but as mere means and tools to whatever ends he pleased. This idea entails...the idea of contrast, that what he may say to an animal he may not say to a fellow human; that he must rather consider the latter as an equal participant in the gifts of nature. This idea was the first preparation of all those restraints in his relations with his fellow men which reason would in due course impose on man's will, restraints which are far more essential for the establishment of a civil society than inclination and love.⁴³

Here man's special status of person is awakened not, as in the Biblical account through the agency of divine command to 'subdue and have dominion (I. 28.), but through reason's

perception of the distinction between ends and means. The distinction, particularly with respect to its implication for man's fellows, is at first 'obscure', but it is foundational in that it is 'the first preparation' for all that is to follow.

But, even accepting that this is in fact the case, we are yet left with a crucial question about which Kant appears to be silent. Why must every person be considered as an equal participant in the gift of nature? Kant's answer appears to be that man recognizes himself as a species to be the 'end of nature' and as such he perceives himself as ontologically distinct from animals who as mere ends are legitimately used as tools. This, however, is simply a reiteration of the claim to distinguished status, not a justification of it. On the face of it this preference for personhood might appear decidedly inappropriate inasmuch as far as 'natural gifts are concerned, other beings may surpass man beyond all comparison.'⁴⁴ From a more considered perspective, however, man's status as end is justified, Kant argues, because of his rational abilities - 'reason considered not insofar as it is a tool to the satisfaction of his inclinations, but insofar as it makes him an end in himself.' Man's status as end is thus, Kant suggests, a result both of his perception of himself as such a being and of his possession of rationality. In the end, of course, these are the same since man's image of himself as end is quite obviously an

idea that derives from reason itself. Kant's suggestion that man's awareness of his status as end is rationally generated rather than divinely revealed is not incidental for it serves to support his more crucial argument that man's status as end (as distinct from his recognition of that status), is not divinely conferred. (We shall argue later - see Chapter Three - that Kant should have opted for a theory of man as end as a divinely ordered fact.) For as he notes 'man had entered into a relation of equality with all rational beings, whatever their rank...with respect to the claim of being an end in himself.'⁴⁵

Despite this movement from the world of animals to the world of persons precipitated by reason, man is still very much within the realm of nature, for Kant is careful to note that he has been released not from nature itself, but rather from the incubating role of nature - nature's 'womb'. The tension between the natural and the rational is thus not eliminated but rendered more complex. Indeed, man's new state is 'fraught with danger' in the sense that with his awakened powers of foresight 'restless reason' now generates worry and care which appeared to be absent from man's instinct-originated experience of the world. Instinct, which provided the 'tutelage of nature' is now supplanted by the possibility, though not by any means, the certainty of 'rational control'.

Man's departure from that paradise which his reason represents as the first abode of his species was nothing but the transition from an uncultured, merely animal condition to that state of humanity, from

bondage to instinct to rational control - in a word, from the tutelage of nature to the state of freedom.⁴⁶

It is easy to misconstrue the tension between the natural and the rational which Kant believes to exist now that man has moved in some sense beyond nature's realm toward freedom. The conflict or tension should not be read as a moral one in the sense of natural dispositions which are evil over against rational dispositions which are good. Kant does speak at times of 'different dispositions' natural and social, but this is more to suggest the non-moral character rather than the unmoral character of the instinct. (As we shall see, Kant's account of persons offered in Religion - (see Chapter Four) even suggests that the natural dispositions must, for a variety of reasons, be good, and their corruption a product, however curiously, of man's moral capacities.) Natural dispositions might in fact serve good purposes. Indeed, nature is not so clumsy so as to have 'endowed living beings with instincts and capacities in order that they should fight and surpress them.'⁴⁷ Nature, Kant notes, 'has given us two different dispositions for two different purposes, the one for man as an animal, the other for him as a moral species.'⁴⁸ Our natural disposition is intended simply for the 'preservation of man as an animal species' not for the development of morality. Within the context of the natural order man's natural dispositions are thus unobjectionable; it is only within the moral order that they have the potential, indeed, Kant seems to suggest, the certainty of being problematic.⁴⁹ Man's peculiar status as

end does not therefore exempt him from the natural order, though man's rational capacities should, in time, move him 'from bondage to instinct to rational control',⁵⁰ from animal disposition to freedom. History is thus for Kant the 'inevitable conflict between culture and human species',⁵¹ where human species is read as 'natural species' with animal dispositions. History is simultaneously the making, the development of human nature through the cultivation of reason and freedom in both the individual and the species. And it is this tension between individual and species progress that makes for some, though certainly not all, of history's ambiguity. As Kant argues 'For the individual, who in the use of his freedom is concerned only with himself, the whole change was a loss; for nature, whose purpose with man concerns the species, it was a gain.'⁵² The egocentricity of the individual perspective of history is thus relatively unimportant for Kant, though he sees egocentricity as a fundamental constraint on both genuine freedom and morality in that both of these demand objectivity, something that egocentricity renders impossible. It is rather nature's species perspective and purposes which are central.

But to speak of nature's purposes is to draw attention to another puzzling feature of this account. It is not merely that history embraces individual and species destinies which may be quite radically distinct if not incompatible, but that history itself seems to be the product of a

partnership between nature and reason. This is not the familiar and to some degree understandable combination of animal and moral disposition about which Kant speaks, but rather Nature - read as the entire natural order outside of man - as in some way contributing to man's development. Man does make himself but he appears, according to Kant to also be made by Nature. Thus the ambiguity of man the moral and animal being who while moving from the tutelage of nature to the state of freedom' is nonetheless assisted by that from which he endeavours to be free.

It is this tension between nature as originator and context and freedom as goal that also provides Kant with the basis for his doctrine of individual responsibility, his reconciliation of conjectural history and the orthodox Christian understanding of sin, and finally for his theodicy as well. Nature's contribution to man, what Kant terms the 'history of nature' is wholly good 'since it is the work of God.'⁵³ But reason's contribution to personhood has a decidedly mixed character.

Before reason awoke, there was as yet neither commandment nor prohibition and hence also no violation of either. But when reason began to set about its business, it came, in all its pristine weakness, into conflict with animality, with all its power. Inevitably evils sprang up, and...along with the cultivation of reason also vices, such as^h been wholly alien to the state of ignorance and innocence. Morally the first step from this latter state was therefore a fall; physically, it was a punishment, for the host of formerly unknown ills were a consequence of this fall. The history of nature therefore begins with good, for it is the work of God, while the history of freedom⁵⁴ begins with wickedness, for it is the work of man.

Read superficially, this account has all of the appearances of Christian orthodoxy with its talk of wickedness, moral corruption and a fall. But Kant's account, understood in the context of what has gone before, has other intentions. Kant's understanding of history does not include a vision of human persons struggling to recover something lost in their first parents, though it certainly contains struggle; the goal of history is not portrayed as return to Eden, as man somehow come full circle. Rather, the goal of history is the making in the sense of creating persons of reason and morality, persons unlike any who have existed in a past age: 'For this course is not a decline from good to evil, but rather a gradual development from the worse to the better.'⁵⁵ It is in this sense that Kant speaks about a fall - not as something in which man trades moral perfection for moral fallibility, but as a process in which he trades innocence and ignorance, and this conjunction is not accidental for Kant, for knowledge and moral responsibility, and "a whole host of formerly unknown ills'. Persons thus are not justified in attributing either their own morally blameworthy characters or the character of the entire natural and world to divine malice or incompetence, or heredity for

the individual must consider as his own fault, not only every act of wickedness which he commits, but also all the evils which he suffers; and yet at the same time, insofar as he is a member of a whole (a species), he must admire and praise the wisdom and purposiveness of the whole arrangement.⁵⁶

An exposition of his history such as the above, then is useful for man, and conducive to his instruction and improvement. It teaches him that he must not blame the evils which oppress him on Providence, nor attribute his own offense to an original sin committed by his first parents. (For free actions can in no aspects be hereditary.) Such an exposition teaches man, that, under like circumstances, he would act exactly like his first parents, that is, abuse reason in the very first use of reason, the advice of nature to the contrary notwithstanding. Hence he must recognize what they have done as his own act, and thus blame only himself for the evils which spring from the abuse of reason. Once the blame for moral evils is correctly laid where it belongs, the strictly physical evils will hardly add up, in the ledger of merit and guilt, to a balance which is in our favor.⁵⁷

Man's abuse of reason in its 'very first use' is a genuinely personal act for Kant not merely in the sense that it continues to be the foundation for all subsequent human development of moral responsibility, but in the just as direct sense that each descendent of the first human pair would quite probably have initiated the same pattern of misused rational power were he to have been in Adam and Eve's position. Thus the 'evils which spring from the abuse of reason' are not evils outside the context of genuinely human origins and responsibility. But, at the same time, whatever the devastating personal consequences of reason's first stirrings, nature's 'wisdom and purposiveness' might yet triumph in the life of the species as a whole.

Despite Kant's attempt to do justice to both the Biblical material and the demands of moral responsibility, it seems obvious that his account will not work. For one thing the doctrine of noumenal character means if it means anything at all that the mechanism of moral choice and

finally of all moral action is, on the basis of Kant's own epistemology, genuinely inscrutable. Kant thus has no reasonable basis for his claim that persons ought to recognize Adam and Eve's acts as their own on the grounds that under similar circumstances they would have acted in a similar fashion. More importantly, Kant believes that the ills of nature can also be plausibly attributed to the misuse of reason, and while this might be convincingly argued with respect to some natural evils, it cannot be held to be true of all of them. Kant, of course, develops as well the claim that reasons' progress - man's development - is made possible, at least in part, by nature's rigours. But this argument can work only if these evils are not disproportionate to their ends considered not simply in the species context, as Kant does, but also in the lives of individuals. It is in this latter sense, in the personal dimension of the historical progress, that Kant's sanguine assurances about the 'strictly physical evils' not adding up seem finally unconvincing.

However unfortunate the individual's encounters with natural impulse and natural disorder, Kant appears convinced that the 'ultimate moral end of the human species',⁵⁸ and end in which art, by which Kant appears to mean not merely culture in the conventional sense but art as rational - moral nature 'will be strong and perfect enough to become a second nature',⁵⁹ The progress toward this second nature will be decidedly uneven but the progress is certain, a

theme which dominates the penultimate section of the Conjectural Beginning, which Kant titles 'The End of History'. Here Kant explicates the fourth through sixth chapters of Genesis with a view to accounting not, as before, for reason's emergence, but for reason's part in the development of culture and society first through the separation of farmers and herdsman (the Cain and Abel story), then through the emergence amongst farmers of urban centres, 'mutual exchange' the 'first beginning of culture, art, of entertainment and of the habit of industriousness' but most crucially the advent of 'some kind of civil order and public administration of justice.'⁶⁰ All of this is, Kant suggests, progress, but progress conceived of in an ambiguous sense inasmuch as the rise of sociability and public administration - the development of 'civil order' leads as well to 'human inequality...that rich source of so many evils but also of everything good.'⁶¹ This ambivalent character of progress and, really of reason itself, is perhaps observed most clearly in the last epoch of man's beginning (which culminates in the Flood narrative), which concludes with the unification of the 'two formerly hostile groups; the farmers and herdsman, a unification which brings with it an end to the possibility of war but also an' end of all liberty.'⁶²

The result is a depositism of powerful tyrants and - culture having barely begun - not only an abominable state of slavery, but along with it soulless-sense-indulgence mixed with all the vices of an as yet uncivilized condition. A further result is also that the human species is irresistibly turned away from the

task assigned to it by nature, the progressive cultivation of its disposition to goodness.⁶³

Thus Kant leaves us, at the end of the beginning of human history, on a note of pessimism if not outright despair. This is, however, offset by the 'concluding remark' where again he attempts a justification of the course of human development. Human dissatisfaction with the order of nature focuses, Kant argues, on three specific complaints, war, or at least the 'never ceasing and indeed ever-increasing preparation for a future war'⁶⁴, the brevity of life, and the inability to return to an 'age of simplicity and innocence'⁶⁵. Only the shortness of life is a complaint which can legitimately be lodged against the 'order of nature', for war and man's 'present troublesome condition' from which he finds it impossible to escape are both the products of his reason. As for the shortness of life, 'its greater length would merely prolong a game of unceasing war with troubles'⁶⁶, while war is 'indispensable means to the still further development of human culture.' The desire to return to some fancied golden age is, while understandable, inasmuch as thoughtful persons weary of civilized life,⁶⁷ nonetheless impossible once reason has been awakened. In the end, then, man is left with a history which is far from ideal, but a history in which the majority of unfortunate events are a product of his own hand and those which are not are at least attributable to the somewhat shadowy providence of nature, whose intentions are at least always admirable in the aggregate.

This, then is the lesson taught by a philosophical attempt to write the most ancient past of human history: contentment with Providence, and with the course of human affairs, considered as a whole. For this course is not a decline from good to evil, but rather a gradual development from the worse to the better....⁶⁸

Reason while thus the origin of so much that is unfortunate in human existence is also curiously enough the source of virtually all that is finally good. This is to be observed most centrally in reason's shrewd summing up of human prospects which while not blinking at those sources of 'human dissatisfaction' is yet able to root in the structure of nature's intelligibility, in empirical claim and, perhaps, more crucially in hope, the belief that man's story is 'not a decline' but a gradual movement from the 'worse to the better.'

II

These same elements which dominate the beginnings of human history - nature, reason and freedom - also structure a second of Kant's historical accounts of the origin and development of personhood, the Idea for A Universal History From a Cosmopolitan Point of View (hereafter Idea).

History, Kant tells us, is really the narrative of the 'appearances' in human actions of the freedom of the will, and despite this spontaneity which must, conceptually at least, structure our readings of individual human actions, 'we may be able to discern a regular movement' in the

actions of persons considered as a whole. While individuals thus set and act upon their own personal agendas which are a peculiar mixture of wisdom and folly, there might yet be some 'guiding thread' which directs all toward a general destiny which nature has prepared.

Since the philosopher cannot presuppose any individual purpose among men in their great drama, there is no other expedient for him except to try to see if he can discover a natural purpose in this idiotic course of things human. In keeping with this purpose, it might be possible to have a history with a definite natural plan for creatures who have no plan of their own.⁶⁹

Kant does not, of course, intend to produce a history of man according to nature's plan. Instead, he wishes to simply provide a 'clue to such a history',⁷⁰ a clue developed in the form of nine theses. Kant's clue is structured around what he terms the 'teleological theory of nature', which is a reading of the natural world in relation to human nature that follows a course very similar to that of the Conjectural Beginnings in that what appears to lie at the core of nature, or at least the human experience of nature and of persons, is purpose and reason. Kant believes that this is confirmed by both 'the outward form and inward structure of all animals' since 'an organ that is of no use, an arrangement that does not achieve its purpose, are contradictions in the teleological theory of nature.'⁷¹ To abandon this premise is to give oneself up to the despair produced by seeing in nature nothing more than aimlessness and blind chance rather than the 'guiding thread of reason.'⁷² Allowing then this inadequately grounded

teleological principle, Kant suggests next that man's natural end is the 'use of his reason', a capacity which is, however, 'to be fully developed only in the race, not in the individual.'⁷³ The reason for this collective or species development of reason is not to be found in nature's caprice but in the character of reason itself which 'does not work instinctively, but requires trial, practice, and instruction in order gradually to progress from one level of insight to another. Therefore a single man would have to live excessively long in order to learn to make full use of all his natural capacities.'⁷⁴ There is admittedly, Kant notes, a certain strangeness to this in that

earlier generations appear to carry through their toilsome labor only for the sake of the later, to prepare for them a foundation on which the later generations could erect the higher edifice which was Nature's goal....However puzzling this may be, it is necessary if one assumes that a species of animal should have reason, and, as a class of rational beings each of whom dies while the species is immortal, should develop their capacities to perfection.⁷⁵

As in the Conjectural Beginnings, so too here we have in this account of nature's purposes, not merely explanation but justification. Despite his claim that 'Nature does nothing in vain',⁷⁶ Kant is fully aware that the course of human development might strike even the most charitable observer as a compound of absurdity and tragedy. Hence he must provide a credible justification for nature's purposes not simply because he wishes to place Nature within the context of divine ordering, though this is in part the case, but perhaps more crucially in order to diminish the

possibility of moral despair as the only legitimate response to a careful consideration of human experience. Nature is thus made subservient to reason not in the usual sense of being transcended in freedom, but through ordering her development of persons around reason's timetable. Nature is forced to achieve her purposes collectively not through a preference for the species over the individual, but because of reason's highly uncertain career in the lives of individual persons. Despite this, Kant's argument seems not to work as a justification in that it is certainly not inconceivable to imagine a more robust version of reason that requires less trial, practice, and instruction and realizes its projects at the individual and the species level with both more speed and more certainty. And if this is conceivable then the ills of human development which are allegedly attributable to reason's feeble character lose much of their necessary character.

But nature also appears here as subservient to reason in the more familiar Kantian sense in which reason is a capacity which has no inherent limitations while Nature has no such freedom. "Reason in a creature is a faculty of widening the rules and purposes of the use of all its powers far beyond natural instinct: it acknowledges no limits to its projects."⁷⁷ Nature to be sure has projects, but these are set in terms of reason's fulfillment. Reason's projects, however, even while within the context of Nature

and indeed, even occasionally thwarted by Nature, are nevertheless destined to transcend Nature.

Closely allied to, in fact inseparable from reason, is freedom and responsibility. Nature acts to initiate man in all of his crucial capacities precisely as it does in the Conjectural Beginnings, but initiation is not determination in that man uses his capacities - his natural capacities including reason in ways for which only he is accountable.

Nature has willed that man should, by himself, produce everything that goes beyond the mechanical ordering of his animal existence, and that he should partake of no other happiness or perfection than that which he himself, independently of instinct, has created by his own reason.⁷⁸

This same connexion of freedom, happiness and perfection is to be found in the Lecture on Ethics which concludes with a passage much like that to be found in the Anthropology. Here (in the Lectures) Kant speaks of the 'ultimate destiny of the human race' as being 'the greatest moral perfection, provided that it is achieved through human freedom, whereby alone man is capable of the greatest happiness.'⁷⁹

God might have made men perfect and given to each his portion of happiness. But happiness would not then have been derived from the inner principle of the world, for the inner principle of the world is freedom. The end, therefore, for which man is destined is to achieve his fullest perfection through his own freedom. God's will is not merely that we should be happy, but that we should make ourselves happy, and this is the true morality.⁸⁰

Nature has thus set the 'mechanical ordering' of the human world but it does nothing with respect to man's 'happiness or perfection', indeed this ambivalence as between happiness and perfection is a reminder that Nature might well be

directed more toward perfection conceived of as independent of happiness. But even this is not quite right, for Nature's gifts also include the capacity of reason and freedom, which inasmuch as 'freedom is the inner principle of the world', is hardly an insignificant contribution. Nature on the one hand is thus parsimonious - but only so that all of man's being 'should be wholly his own work,'⁸¹ for even the guidance of instinct is minimal. 'Man accordingly was not to be guided by instinct, not nurtured and instructed with ready-made knowledge; rather, he should bring forth everything out of his own resources.'⁸² But on the other hand Nature is exceedingly generous in that it has given man something incomparably more valuable than either instinct or happiness.

But is this simultaneous neutrality and participation, aloofness and quiet maneuvering on Nature's part all too glib and easy? Is it not just as reasonable to suggest that Kant presents a picture, very much like Rousseau, of man forced to freedom? Certainly from what he claims in the Conjectural Beginnings about the inevitability of reason, about the impossibility of man returning to the entirely instinctual life seems to suggest that reason at least is something that man cannot remove from his character. Yet the entire burden of Kant's conception of persons as ends in themselves based on their rational and free characters would suggest not, at least in what Kant conceives to be the most crucial sense. Nature might well make freedom a possibility

through setting the conditions in which reason might emerge, but persons, as Kant never tires of repeating, are certainly under no compulsion toward genuine rational-freedom in that they can, and perhaps most frequently do, choose to order their lives according to the maxims of their sensuous inclinations. Of course even this choice of a life deriving its character from the inclinations appears to confirm freedom, and in one sense this is correct, in that Kant believes that freedom can never be wholly abrogated. But the choice for the sensuous inclinations cannot really count, for Kant, as rational freedom at all. In one sense both freedom and rationality are for Kant such conceptual foundations of our experience of the world as moral, that it is inconceivable that we could have any experience without either. At this theoretical level then Nature has in the sense of structuring the world of possible experience made freedom and rationality necessary. But, as Kant reminds us, there is a substantial difference between this theoretical reason and freedom and the experience of freedom and reason in the lives of men. While at the theoretical level inconceivable, a form of freedom issuing in nonfreedom and reason leading to irrationality is, while paradoxical, nonetheless a dimension of the life of persons.

This notion of irrational rationality is complemented by Kant's development in the Fourth Thesis of one of his most famous conceptions, 'unsocial sociability' which is men's 'propensity to enter into society, bound together with

a mutual opposition which constantly threatens to break up the society.⁸³ Men, in their historical development, are drawn by reason toward a social order - they have 'an inclination to associate with others'⁸⁴ but they have at the same time an irrational 'propensity to isolate [themselves] from others, because [they] find ... at the same time the unsocial characteristic of wishing to have everything go according to'⁸⁵ their own wishes. Man's egocentricity thus makes society unstable, but at the same time it also engenders an opposition which 'awakens all his powers, brings him to conquer his inclination to laziness and, propelled by vainglory, lust for power, and avarice, to achieve a rank among his fellows whom he cannot tolerate but from whom he cannot withdraw.'⁸⁶ This peculiar combination of the rational and the irrational and the social and the unsocial is thus the driving force behind culture.

[T]hence gradually develop all talents, and taste is refined; through continued enlightenment the beginnings are laid for a way of thought which can in time convert the coarse, natural disposition for moral discrimination into definite practical principles, and thereby change a society of men driven together by their natural feelings into a moral whole.⁸⁷

This picture tends, of course, to compromise Kant's earlier claim that beyond its mere mechanical ordering, Nature does nothing, for clearly without these admittedly primitive 'natural feelings' of both sociality and competitiveness, the resulting 'moral whole' would be impossible. Nature is thus to be thanked for 'the incompatibility, for the heartless competitive vanity, for

the insatiable desire to possess and to rule! Without them, all the excellent natural capacities of humanity would forever sleep, undeveloped. Man wishes concord; but Nature knows better what is good for the race; she wills discord.'⁸⁸

Without those in themselves unamiable characteristics of unsociability from whence opposition springs, - characteristics each man must find in his own selfish pretensions - all talents would remain hidden, unborn in an Arcadian shepherd's life, with all its concord, contentment, and mutual affection. Men, good natured as the sheep they herd, would hardly reach a higher worth than their beasts; they would not fill the empty place in creation⁸⁹ by achieving their end, which is rational nature.

Egocentricity is thus at least at the beginning of human history the only available engine of progress, though, as we shall see, it is something that must finally be replaced by objectivity if men are to achieve their final end. Concord and mutual affection might indeed be nature's goal, but at history's beginnings they would have doomed men to the contentment of animality. Given the choice between men as 'good-natured as the sheep they herd' and rational - free yet unsocial egocentric men, Kant clearly prefers the latter, though not, it must be emphasized because their unsocial egocentricity is conceived of as intrinsically good, but simply for its instrumental, indeed, its teleological role in making men into quite different beings. This hint of teleology in Nature is straightforward enough in that Kant speaks of the unsociableness and mutual opposition of men as perhaps showing 'the ordering of a wise creator and not the hand of an evil spirit....'⁹⁰

Given this picture of historical man, it is not at all surprising that 'The greatest problem for the human race, to the solution of which Nature drives man, is the achievement of a universal civic society which administers law among men.'⁹¹ Nature, Kant suggests, is still very much the driving, not merely the originating force in human history, and having provided men with a reason which apparently begins in egocentricity, it must now contrive a means by which this same reason might be domesticated by the law. In the one sense, society stands as a model of what properly domesticated or to use Kant's expression, properly disciplined reason, reason truly free yet truly lawful, ought to look like in that it brings together the notions of respect, persons as ends, and rationality in such a manner as to allow, paradoxical as it might appear, both the greatest liberty and the greatest constraint. Despite the necessary character of such a society, necessary since "Nature can achieve her other purposes for mankind only upon the solution and completion of this assignment",⁹² man's 'wild freedom'⁹³ seems destined to make its realization highly improbable. Freedom's wild character, is essentially to be found in its lawlessness, which is nothing more than its tendency to perceive the world solely from the vantage point of its own interests -here again we see the lack of objectivity as a crucial constituent of freedom's irrational nature - that is exempting oneself from the rules whenever it serves one's interest. Wild freedom is thus for Kant

bogus freedom since it fails to acknowledge for him the intrinsic and inviolable connexion between reason, freedom, law and nature. Wild freedom is nature's counterfeit of the genuine article, an artifice, a deception that while tempting is nonetheless transparently false.

In part this counterfeit can be traced to the 'selfish animal impulses' which tempt man, but in the end the responsibility cannot be entirely pushed over to Nature's account. Kant, like Rousseau, clearly sees the difficulty in this diagnosis for he plainly acknowledges that the only source of the master who 'will break his will and force him to obey a will that is universally valid, under which each can be free'⁹⁴ is man himself. "The highest master should be just in himself, and yet a man."⁹⁵ How indeed, can the crippling prejudice of personal interest be put aside so that the rules both belong to everyone but to no one personally? Kant is doubtful about mankind's prospects in this most crucial respect, for in the words of his famous aphorism 'from such crooked wood as man is made of, nothing perfectly straight can be built.'⁹⁶ This skepticism is, however, offset to some degree by his claim in the note expanding on the crookedness of men that individual men might not obtain the perfection for which Nature destines them, but one can yet hope that the race might attain it. In any event the movement toward this society will be possible only after there is a 'correct conception of a possible constitution, great experience gained in many paths

of life, and - far beyond these - a good will ready to accept such a constitution.'⁹⁷ Crucially, it is the good will which is the necessary condition for Nature's final aim, and, as we shall argue (see Chapter Five), this good will is itself to be found only within a particular sort of society - the Kingdom of Ends. This appears to make the resolution of wild freedom theoretically and indeed practically impossible in that the good will required to constitute the society in which law, respect, freedom and rationality are finally conjoined must itself come from such a society.

But if this entire enterprise of freedom appears to founder on the connexion between the good will and the perfect political order, it also encounters substantial and perhaps insurmountable problems through Kant's insistence that perfect states must as well only be the product of a reformed international order. The logic of the position hinges on the constancy of man's nature; 'the same unsociability which drives man to this [the creation of a state] causes any single commonwealth to stand in unrestricted freedom in relation to others; consequently, each of them must expect from another precisely the evil which oppressed the individuals and forced them to enter into a lawful civic state.'⁹⁸ The comparably intimate discord of men within societies thus has a more generalized counterpart in the international order - but again, this

seemingly and in some sense quite genuinely disastrous character is nevertheless part of Nature's design.

The friction among men, the inevitable antagonism, which is the mark of even the largest societies and political bodies, is used by Nature as a means to establish a condition of quiet and security. Through war, through the taxing and never-ending accumulation of armament, through the want which any state, even in peacetime, must suffer internally, Nature forces them to make at first inadequate and tentative attempts; finally, after devastation, revolution, and even complete exhaustion, she brings them to that which reason could have told them at the beginning and with far less sad experience, to wit, a step from the lawless condition of savages into a league of nations.

All of this teleological talk of Nature forcing man, raises again the questions as to whether the course of freedom's development is itself free, whether it makes any sense to speak of a guided freedom, and how, given Kant's own epistemological constraints he can assert with such certainty that the process is indeed Nature's rather than reason's. Throughout both of his historical accounts of man Kant makes a distinction between the career of Nature and career of reason, though this is much more pronounced in the Idea. Crucial to the distinction is the assumption that the sorry history of man's development with its feeble progress and monumental retreats yet final triumph, could not be the product of reason, that is to say human reason, but must be traced to Nature, which while officially unadmitted, Kant nonetheless wishes to read as Divine Nature. Kant thus has an extraordinarily and perhaps unwarrantedly strong conception of reason, one that excludes, seemingly by definition, much of its empirical, that is to say, its

experimental character. If we were to read reason in a less strong fashion as encompassing substantial amounts of trial and error, for instance, and exhibiting far less foresight, then the development of men might make just as much sense, indeed perhaps more sense, conceived as simply that - the development of men who without any assistance from nature, must come, always slowly, to understand, employ and discipline their rational capacities. The real difficulty with Kant's conception of human development may thus lie in the fact that reason seems to lose its self-defining and self-developing capacities - at least in any really important sense - too early in the process. Reason might carry man beyond instinct, initially, but the remainder of the process must be left in Nature's hands. Despite his constant extolling of its virtues, human reason, for Kant, seems in the end to be unreliable either for man's or Nature's purposes.

At bottom, of course, these questions lead to the larger problem of the legitimacy of any kind of teleological perspective. In just what sense is Kant justified in speaking about Nature's purposes in man's character and history at all? Kant is most certainly alive to this problem in that he proposes in the Seventh Thesis an Epicurean counter-argument to his own thesis of an ordered and ordering Nature.

Would it be expected from an Epicurean concourse of efficient causes that states, like minute particles of matter in their chance contacts, should form all sorts of unions which in their turn are destroyed by new

impacts, until once, finally, by chance a structure should arise which could maintain its existence - a fortunate accident that could hardly occur?

Or perhaps we should prefer to conclude that, from all these actions and counteractions of men in the large, absolutely nothing, at least nothing wise, is to issue? That everything should remain as it always was, that we cannot therefore tell but that discord, natural to our race, may not prepare for us a hell of evils, however civilized we may now be, by annihilating civilization and all cultural progress through barbarous devastation? (This is the fate we may well have to suffer under the rule of blind chance - which is in fact identical with lawless freedom - if there is no secret wise guidance in Nature.)¹⁰⁰

As he puts the question himself, 'Is it reasonable to assume a purposiveness in all the parts of nature and to deny it to the whole?'¹⁰¹ But even this patient attention to the cause for disorder and chaos appears to miss the essence of the anti-teleological argument, namely, it is not obvious that even the parts of nature display the purpose that Kant wishes to ascribe to the whole. In a crucial sense Kant's arguments seem to have missed the force of both Hume's and his own objections against teleological thinking in that they fail to recall that teleological considerations invariably involve one in the construction of analogies, and inasmuch as our empirical capacities limit our experience to this world, we do not possess the requisite knowledge of other worlds, other natural orders which is necessary to render a judgement about the purpose or lack of purpose in our own. Large scale, that is to say, nature-wide ascriptions of purpose, what might be called purpose of nature readings are obviously illegitimate and small-scale assumptions of purpose, what might be called purpose in

nature readings, though dependent on the character of the relevant analogy, might also be found to be inappropriate.

But even allowing for all of this, one is left with at least the suspicion that Kant's arguments will not work because he has misconstrued order, which can be explained on his own terms as simply the category-imposed structure of the world, with design or purpose. The world might well be rationally explicable, it might genuinely exhibit an order which from the human perspective can be termed rational, but this is not to say that it is also purposive, for the alleged natural order and its purposiveness may in the end be nothing more than projected human order, and the very conjunction of rational and purposive may be an idiosyncratic human conflation as opposed to a natural necessity.

The entire direction of Kant's reading of rational is quite naturally different for he believes that reason's character cannot but include purpose and that if the world is thus construed as rational it must also be construed as purposive. Thus even 'purposeless savagery' assumes a purpose.

Purposeless savagery held back the development of the capacities of our race; but finally, through the evil into which it plunged mankind, it forced our race to renounce this condition and enter into a civic order in which those capacities could be established. The same is done by the barbaric freedom of established states. Through wasting the powers of the commonwealths in armaments to be used against each other, through devastation brought on by war, and even more by the necessity of holding themselves in constant readiness for war, they stunt the full development of human nature. But because of the evils which thus arise, our

race is forced to find, above the...opposition of states which is a consequence of their freedom, a law of equilibrium and a united power to give it effect.¹⁰²

But even this progress - the union of states, is nothing more than a 'halfway mark in the development of mankind'¹⁰³, for as Kant noted previously the moral order of perfection - the good will is the final end, and

So long as states waste their forces in vain and violent self-expansion, and thereby constantly thwart the slow efforts to improve the minds of their citizens by even withdrawing all support from them, nothing in the way of a moral order is to be expected.¹⁰⁴

What empirical evidences do we then have of 'Nature's secret plan to bring forth a perfectly constituted state...'¹⁰⁵?

Kant hedges, but is nonetheless hopeful. Nature 'reveals something, but very little.' 'Enlightenment comes gradually, with intermittent folly and caprice...'¹⁰⁷

At present, states are in such an artificial relation to each other that none of them can neglect its internal cultural development without losing power and influence among the others. Therefore the preservation of this natural end [culture], if not progress in it, is fairly well assured by the ambitions of states. Furthermore, civic freedom can hardly be infringed without the evil consequences being felt in all walks of life, especially in commerce, where the effect is loss of power of the state in its foreign relations. But this freedom spreads by degrees.¹⁰⁸

In the final instance, purpose is supported not by appeals to the visible character of Nature, so much as considerations like hope, which must, by their very nature, apprehend a 'thread' of history unapparent to those who do not share hope's perspective.

...if...one carries through this study, a guiding thread will be revealed. It can serve not only for clarifying the confused play of things human, and not only for the art of prophesying later political

changes...but for giving a consoling view of the future (which could not be reasonably hoped for without the presupposition of a natural plan) in which there will be exhibited in the distance how the human race finally achieves the condition in which all the seeds planted in it by Nature can fully develop and in which the destiny of the race can be fulfilled here on earth.¹⁰⁹

Here then in Nature and History teleologically ordered we find the central component in the moral faith described in Chapter One as the foundational motif in Kant's mature anthropology. Nature and History must be purposive or the 'history of mankind...must remain an unceasing reproach' and a source of moral despair.

Such a justification of Nature - or, better, of Providence - is no unimportant reason for choosing a standpoint toward world history. For what is the good of esteeming the majesty and wisdom of Creation in the realm of brute nature and of recommending that we contemplate it, if that part of the great state of supreme wisdom which contains the purpose of all the others - the history of mankind - must remain an unceasing reproach to it? If we are forced to turn our eyes from it in disgust, doubting that we can ever find a perfectly rational purpose in it and hoping for that only in another world?¹¹⁰

The certainty then of Nature's purposes and of mankind's perfection of freedom cannot be found in the work of empirical history since 'this great revolution seems to require so long for its completion that the short period during which humanity has been following this course permit us to determine its path and the relation of the path to the whole with as little certainty as we can determine...the path of the sun....¹¹¹ Hope, however, allows us to read into history and Nature the 'fundamental premise of the systematic structure of the cosmos and from the little that

has been observed, we can confidently infer the reality of such a revolution.'¹¹²

III

In many respects it might seem odd to place the third Critique within a discussion of the historical foundations of Kant's account of persons, but this work, which we considered in terms of the development of Kant's thinking about the nature - man tension in Chapter One, is nevertheless an important supplement to the teleology of Nature and persons developed in both the Idea and Conjectural Beginning.

For our immediate purposes (we will have reference to the Critique proper in Chapter Three), the most significant section is the long appendix, 'Method of Applying the Teleological Judgment' where Kant attempts to justify the claim that there is a 'necessary subordination of the principle of mechanism to the teleological principle.'¹¹³ This subordination does not develop out of empirical considerations strictly construed, for Kant suggests that there is far too much natural evidence in favour of disorder and chaos to justify a subordination of the principle of mechanism.

Land and sea not alone contain memorials of mighty primeval disasters that have overtaken both them and all their brood of living forms, but their entire structure - the strata of the land and the coast lines of the sea- has all the appearance of being the outcome of the wild and all-subduing forces of a nature working in a state of chaos.¹¹⁴

Moreover, this apparent randomness does not exempt the human world from its abrogation of purpose.

If we adopt the principle of an objective finality in the manifold variety of the specific forms of terrestrial life and in their extrinsic relations to one another as beings with a structure adapted to ends, it is only rational to go on and imagine that in this extrinsic relation there is also a certain organization and a system of the whole kingdom of nature following final causes. But experience seems here to give the lie to the maxim of reason, more especially as regards an ultimate end of nature - an end which nevertheless is necessary to the possibility of such a system, and which we can only place in man. For, so far from making man, regarded as one of the many animal species, an ultimate end, nature has no more exempted him from its destructive than from its productive forces, nor has it made the smallest exception to its subjection of everything to a mechanism of forces devoid of an end.¹¹⁵

This does not, however, suggest to Kant that the principle of mechanism is the only legitimate principle of explanation, for despite the strong empirical evidence to the contrary, the principle of mechanical explanation violates equally compelling rational considerations. Whatever the diligence of our mechanical explanations of nature and persons, these sorts of explanations are intrinsically unacceptable - not by virtue of their empirical inadequacy but because they run counter to the purposive structure of our reason. Try as we might, we cannot dispense with purposive readings of Nature. Our most fundamental intellectual desire is for cognitive completion, for a conceptual scheme which provides the most comprehensive unity of apparent diversity. 'Reason is a faculty of principles, and the unconditioned is the ultimate goal at which it aims.'¹¹⁶ Teleology thus develops out of

the 'constitution of our understanding and our reason' in that we are 'unable to conceive the origin in the case of beings of this kind otherwise than in the light of final causes.'¹¹⁷

The utmost persistence possible, nay even a boldness, is allowed us in our endeavours to explain them on mechanical lines. More than that, we are even summoned by reason to do so, albeit we know we can never get home with such an explanation - not because there is an inherent inconsistency between the mechanical generation and an origin according to ends, but for subjective reasons involved in the particular type and limitations of our understanding.¹¹⁸

Not simply is reason's freedom thus qualified - in the obvious sense that it can 'never get home with' mechanical explanations' but it is left with the uneasy feeling that its perception of the world is governed not by objectivity but by subjective considerations, considerations that might well be at odds with the 'real' character of the world.

But the rational priority of purposiveness as a principle for understanding Nature has its real goal not merely in establishing the design of Nature, but of securing man's place 'not merely as a physical end, such as all organized beings are, but as the being upon this earth who is the ultimate end of nature, and the one in relation to whom all other natural things constitute a system of ends.'¹¹⁹ Indeed, this is the entire importance of the third Critique in Kant's anthropology, it establishes man as the being with the rational freedom of the good will as the only absolute end and thus the only end who finally transcends Nature. Kant is thus interested simultaneously,

and this accounts for much of the opacity of his argument, in establishing man's end as something - as in the Idea and Conjectural Beginnings - to which Nature has simply contributed, but from which Nature is ultimately excluded, and Nature's role in determining man's end. And it is at this point that history - the history of the Idea in particular, re-enters the conceptual picture. History and Nature are once again immensely ambiguous in that Kant clearly wishes to allow them some role in man's development, but at the same time to close off securely the possibility that the end of man in Nature, and indeed, finally outside of it, could be merely something that man receives 'from the hand of nature.'¹²⁰ Man's end must thus be something discovered in Nature yet ultimately beyond it. Of the two proposed candidates for Nature's end, happiness and culture, happiness is quickly, perhaps too quickly, dismissed on the grounds that man's nature is 'not constituted as to rest or be satisfied in any possession or enjoyment whatever.'

Then external nature is far from having made a particular favourite of man or from having preferred him to all other animals as the object of its beneficence. For we see that in its destructive operations - plague, famine, flood, cold, attacks from animals great and small, and all such things - it has as little spared him as any other animal. But, besides all this, the discord of inner natural tendencies betrays him into further misfortunes of his own invention, and reduces other members of his species through the oppression of lordly power, the barbarism of wars, and the like to such misery, while he himself does all he can to work ruin to his race, that, even with the utmost good will on the part of external nature, its end, supposing it were directed to happiness of our species would never be attained in a system of terrestrial nature, because our own nature is not capable of it.

This argument is a peculiar one in that on the one hand Kant appears to suggest that Nature cannot provide any degree of happiness, that man's perfection and his happiness - to echo the Lectures - are his own achievement, in which case happiness - as something not from the 'hand of Nature' - could count as the end of man; while on the other hand Kant appears to suggest that man's happiness is attainable through Nature. 'Earthly happiness is an end of the latter kind. It is understood to mean the complex of all possible human ends attainable through nature whether in man or external to him.'¹²² (emphasis mine)

Man's end must lie not in happiness but in a connexion with his 'understanding, and, consequently, a capacity for setting before himself ends of his deliberate choice....',¹²³ What then might Nature contribute to man that would actually further man's emancipation from Nature itself? Kant's answer is culture - 'the production in a rational being of an aptitude for any ends whatever of his own choosing, consequently of the aptitude of a being in his freedom, is culture.' Hence it is only 'culture that can be the ultimate end which we have cause to attribute to nature in respect of the human race.'¹²⁴

Therefore, of all his ends in nature, we are left only with a formal, subjective condition, that.... of the aptitude for setting ends before himself at all, and independent of nature in his power of determining ends, of employing nature as a means in accordance with the maxims of his free ends generally. This alone remains as what nature can effect relative to the final end that lies outside it, and as what may therefore be regarded as its ultimate end.¹²⁵

Nature's role, indeed its value for Kant is that it contributes to man's making through culture, to his ability to independently set ends in opposition to natural inclination. In this sense Nature's goal is to render itself obsolete, or at least minimal, to make unnecessary its initial and ultimately only provisional end-setting for men. Thus the teleology of the third Critique is an elaboration at one level of negative freedom, the freedom from the natural world of desire.

This latter condition of aptitude, involving what might be called culture by way of discipline, is negative. It consists in the liberation of the will from the despotism of desires whereby, in our attachment to certain natural things, we are rendered incapable of exercising a choice of our own.¹²⁶

But the emergence of culture, as in the Idea and Conjectural Beginning, is ambiguous when viewed simply through the lens of happiness, for inasmuch as culture depends on the setting and obtaining ends, something that varies in terms of individual capacities, it will invariably produce inequality - 'Skill can hardly be developed in the human race otherwise than by means of inequality among men.'¹²⁷ This inequality in turn produces discrepancies in terms of wealth and with these political unrest. But Nature's misanthropy is really a 'splendid misery' in that it propels men, much, perhaps against their wishes, toward that freedom which is Nature's end and their own, and which can 'attain this its real end' only through 'a constitution so regulating the mutual relations of men that the abuse of freedom by individuals striving one against another is opposed by a lawful

authority centred in a whole, called a civil community.¹²⁸ Even war, as in the Idea and Conjectural Beginning, 'in spite of the terrible calamities which it inflicts on the human race, and the hardships...imposed by the constant preparation for it in time of peace' serves as a 'spur for developing to the highest pitch all talents that minister to culture.'¹²⁹ Again, the arts and sciences assist in this process of subduing the 'violence and rudeness' of our inclinations by freeing us from the 'tyrannical propensities of sense, and so prepare man for a sovereignty in which reason alone shall have sway.'¹³⁰

There is, however, another level of freedom which the teleology of nature is at work on aside from negative freedom, and that is the positive freedom of a will imposing on itself the conditions of the moral law. This is not the freedom of simply setting any arbitrary ends - even ends differing from inclination, but is instead the freedom which 'sets' the ends of the genuinely rational - ends flowing out of the moral law itself. It is, of course, only in the sense of man providing the means whereby the moral law might replicate the Law of Nature through establishing its own universality, not through edict but rather through choice, that man becomes the final end of the existence of the world. This end, man's end of positive freedom, is something to which Nature contributes only indirectly through culture, for Nature as conditioned is incompetent, Kant believes, 'to realize or produce in terms of its idea

because it is one that is unconditioned.'¹³¹ The character of Nature's law is at least similar though, to the character of the moral law in that both are necessary, though the quality of necessity in the moral law is formally, though not materially self-imposed. (Kant does speak at times as if he believed that the moral law is such a foundational part of experience that it carries a more than formal necessity.) Only positive freedom then finally 'liberates' man from the unchosen necessity of Nature to the freely accepted necessity of the moral law, which in turn allows him to subject the whole of nature to his ends.

Now we have in the world beings of but one kind whose causality is teleological, or directed to ends, and which at the same time are beings of such a character that the law according to which they have to determine ends for themselves is represented by them themselves as unconditioned and not dependent on anything in nature, but as necessary in itself. The being of this kind is man, but man regarded as noumenon.... For what end...does he exist? His existence inherently involves the highest end - the end to which, as far as in him lies, he may subject the whole of nature, or contrary to which at least he must ~~not~~ deem himself subjected to any influence on its part.¹³²

IV

The same notion of teleology, of the relationship of man and nature as at once adversarial and complimentary, governs Kant's most oft dismissed work, Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View. While the work, given over a course of some thirty years as popular lectures, is of a far different character than the demanding Critiques, its

popular style need not relegate it the intellectual dust bin. (It is curious that Kant is almost universally criticized on account of his difficult style, yet, the Anthropology, which is lucid and even charming in its manner, is hardly ever read.) From the first page, indeed, the same theme of man as a rational, free end who can make himself in distinction from the world of nature that structure the historical works and the third Critique are to be found.

The first sections deal with man in terms of his 'cognitive powers' - self-consciousness, ideas and understanding, sensibility and language, while the second section is given over to an account of feelings, both sensuous and aesthetic. Of most importance, however, in terms of continuity with Kant's other accounts of man is the last section of Part I 'On the Appetitive Power' and the long essay of Part II 'Anthropological Characterization'. Here Kant divides the passions into the 'natural (innate) inclination and passions of inclination that proceed from human culture (acquired inclination).'

The passions of the FIRST kind are the inclinations to freedom and to sex, both of which are connected with emotional agitation. Those of the SECOND kind are the manias for honor, for power, and for possession, which are not connected with the impetuosity of an affect but with the constancy of a maxim established for certain ends.... They are inclinations having to do merely with our possession of the means for satisfying all the inclinations that are concerned directly with ends. So they have, to this extent, an air of reason about them; that is, they aspire to the Idea of a power combined with freedom, by which alone ends in general can be attained.

Kant's account is somewhat inconsistent here in that later he speaks about the 'strongest impulses of nature' as being 'love of life and sexual love',¹³⁴ and introduces in his account of these not merely the notion of natural teleology, but hints of a divine ordering of both the natural and human world, in that 'love of life and sexual love' 'represent the invisible reason (of the ruler of the world) that looks after the human race by a power higher than human reason and provides generally for the highest physical good....',¹³⁵ Aside from the introduction of not merely order and ends but an orderer, this claim about providing for the 'highest physical good' is curious in light of Kant's claims elsewhere about the secondary importance of physical good and happiness. This inconsistency might be more apparent than real if we read 'love of life' as simply a more conceptually primitive version of the inclination to freedom that might characterize even the non-rational organic world. Nevertheless, the 'inclination to freedom is the most vehement of all inclinations in natural man....',¹³⁶ and while containing in as an yet unformed way, all of the elaborated possibilities of freedom, it nonetheless often issues in egoism.

Egoism can take three forms of presumption: presumption of understanding, of taste, and of practical interest; that is, egoism can be logical, aesthetic, or practical. The logical egoist considers it unnecessary to test his judgment by the understanding of others too...the aesthetic egoist is a man content with his own taste...the moral egoist is a man who limits all ends to himself, sees no use in anything except what is useful to him and, as a eudaemonist, locates the supreme determining ground of

his will merely in utility and his own happiness, not in the thought of duty.¹³⁷

Though egoism in its moral form is to be disallowed, Kant speaks both here and in the third Critique of the preferability of pluralism, seeing the world from an objective standpoint, egoism in its other dimensions, and even initially in its moral manner is yet part of Nature's plan of moving man toward his 'inner perfection', which consists in 'his having control over the exercise of all his powers, so that he can use them as he freely chooses.'¹³⁸

This capacity for free choice, of self-creation is the dominate theme of the 'Anthropological Characterization' as well.

All we have left...for assigning man his class in the system of animate nature and so characterizing him is this: that he has a character which he himself creates, insofar as he is capable of perfecting himself according to the ends that he himself adopts. Because of this, man, as an animal endowed with the capacity for reason (animal rationabilis), can¹³⁹ make himself a rational animal (animal rationale).

Man's perfection here, as in the third Critique and the Idea is possible only in the context of self-determined ends, though this is not to suggest that it is simply the process of setting ends without regard for the character of the ends that Kant considers crucial to persons properly conceived. Again, Nature exercises a decisive role not merely in terms of facilitator but also in terms of her own purposes, for Nature implants in man the 'seeds of discord' but wills that out of this 'man's own reason bring concord.' 'In the Idea this concord is the end; but in actuality, discord is the

means, in nature's schema, of a supreme end, to us, inscrutable wisdom which uses cultural progress to realize man's perfection, even at the price of much of his enjoyment of life.'¹⁴⁰ Again, Kant considers it simply obvious that such distinctions between concord as the end and discord as the means can be intelligently made.

Aside from their general abilities to adopt and realize ends, Kant wishes to distinguish persons from other natural beings through their three 'predispositions' (Kant uses the same notion of predisposition in Religion - see Chapter Four): the 'technical predisposition for manipulating things (a mechanical predisposition joined with consciousness), by his pragmatic predisposition (for using other men skillfully for his purposes), and by the moral predisposition in his being (to treat himself and others according to the principle of freedom under laws).'¹⁴¹ Initially it would appear that two of these predispositions, the pragmatic, which is orientated toward using men, and the moral which aims to bring both oneself and others under the discipline of freedom, stand in conflict with each other. While it is true that Kant appears to see a significant role for pragmatic anthropology in terms of enabling one to use persons, this nonetheless is not at least formally inconsistent with his claims about persons as ends in that one is enjoined never to treat fellow rational agents merely as means, but always as ends as well. Moreover, the pragmatic predisposition focuses as much on 'man's

disposition to become civilized by culture,'¹⁴² as it does on the manipulation of persons, though Kant does seem to believe that manipulation is a culturally developed characteristic. This cultural progress, as in the Idea and Conjectural Beginning has all elements of chance and the accidental removed from it, for 'while his tendency to this final end can often be obstructed, it can never be completely reversed.'¹⁴³

As one would expect, the most important of these predispositions is the moral by which Kant means the question as to whether 'man is good by nature, or evil by nature....'¹⁴⁴ Kant argues that whatever his intellectual capacities, man cannot help but see himself as 'subject to the law of duty' and this points to his intelligible character as at least 'good by nature',¹⁴⁵ where good is read as understanding the possibility of moral action. Experience, however, Kant affirms, also points in the opposite direction in that man, though unable to escape the pull of the moral law yet display a 'tendency to actively desire what is unlawful even though he knows that it is unlawful - that is, a tendency to evil - which makes itself felt as inevitably and as soon as he begins to exercise his freedom.'¹⁴⁶ Persons are thus both bad and good, and as a species man is best judged as a 'rational being that' attempts, though with 'intervals of barbarism' to 'rise out of evil in constant progress toward the good.'¹⁴⁷

The sum total of what pragmatic anthropology has to say about man's destiny and the character of his

development is this: man is destined by his reason to live in society with men and in it to cultivate himself, to civilize himself,¹⁴⁸ and to make himself moral by the arts and sciences.

The arts and sciences, are central to culture, and culture itself are all integral to man's education away from evil toward the good. Kant realizes that this process of 'education' is far from certain inasmuch as 'those who are supposed to educate him are again men who are themselves still involved in the crudity of nature and are supposed to bring about what they themselves are in need of.'¹⁴⁹ But even this stark admission may be overly optimistic in that, as Kant appears to recognize in Religion, moral reform in the genuine sense might depend as much on supernatural assistance as educational efforts.

In one sense, this supernatural assistance is present in the Anthropology too, for Kant speaks here not merely about Nature as man's spur, as he does in the Idea or parts of the third Critique, but about Providence as the source of man's education. The familiar elements of unhappiness, suffering, war and general calamity which worked for man's good in bringing him toward the perfection of freedom are all here, but now they are put securely within the context of Providence.

Only from Providence does he expect his species to tend toward the civil constitution it envisages, which is to be based on the principle of freedom but at the same time on the principle of constraint in accordance with law. That is, he expects it from a wisdom that is not his, but is yet the Idea of his own reason, and Idea that is impotent.... This education from above is salutary but harsh and stern; nature works it out by way of great hardships, to the extent of nearly

destroying the whole race. It consists in bringing forth the good - which man does not intend but which once it is there, continues to maintain itself¹⁵⁰ - from evil, which is intrinsically self-vitiating.

Here then, added to the constant of Nature is what appears, in any normal reading of Providence at least, to be a divine direction to history, a direction which determines Nature's own development of persons. Again, there is both a superficial and a deep paradox to all of this, since Providence's 'wisdom' involves a 'working toward their destruction and yet always protecting them'.¹⁵¹ And with this paradox there is even a more restrained optimism than is to be found in the teleology of the third Critique or the historical writings, for the 'human race should and can create its own good fortune; but that it will do so, we cannot infer a priori from what we have seen of its natural predispositions'.¹⁵² The qualified skepticism about man's success is suggested perhaps by a closer attention to the epistemological limitations of the first Critique, for Kant notes that what possibilities of progress we can detect are inferred 'only from experience and history', though optimism is also necessitated by a moral faith which cautions against despair. History is thus really an interaction of Providence (God) directing Nature which in turn develops man. On one level the three, Providence, Nature and Man have quite separate histories, but at another level (the transcendental, most likely) their careers are inextricably intertwined. Despite this Kant sees no difficulty with freedom for as he repeatedly notes 'the first characteristic

of the human species is man's power, as a rational being, to acquire character as such for his own person as well as for the society in which nature has placed him.¹⁵³ Freedom, in both its negative and positive dimensions is thus freedom in terms of the moral law and, just as crucially, freedom within the confines of society. Kant has no place for uncivil freedom, for man's genuine freedom can only be secured through culture which is necessarily a societal matter. Hence it is the unsocial sociality of persons that cannot do without each other which forces them - in the interests of freedom - to surrender at least some measure of their egoism and submit to the law, though 'only constraint to laws they themselves have given.'¹⁵⁴

The character of the species, as it is indicated by the experience of all ages and of all peoples, is this: that, taken collectively...its is a multitude of persons, existing successively and side by side, who cannot, do without associating peacefully and yet cannot avoid constantly offending one another. Hence they feel destined by nature to [form], through mutual compulsion under laws that proceed from themselves, a coalition in a cosmopolitan society...a coalition which, though constantly threatened by dissension, makes progress on the whole.¹⁵⁵

Freedom and law thus become far more than merely the 'two pivots around which civil legislation turns',¹⁵⁶ they become the structuring elements for all of man's existence. On the one hand they mark off two dimensions of his existence, Nature and the possibility of the moral life, while on the other hand they provide within the realm of genuine personhood itself, totally apart from Nature, the structures of objectivity and self-chosen conformity to that

objectivity. Freedom and law define persons then not simply in terms of the tension of the natural world but within the just as real tension of the moral world.

V

The historical strand of Kant's anthropology has thus discovered the real man that Rousseau had awakened him to, though the man that emerges is in many respects quite different from Rousseau's. He is for one thing not a man who began in perfection and fell into evil, but rather a man, who, beginning in innocence, is yet in the process of perfecting himself through his rational freedom. The abiding character of persons that emerges is that of persons using their rational capacities in accordance with both the proddings of Nature and the impetus of the moral law toward the end of shaping the natural world to noumenal standards. Freedom's calling, though developed in often surprising ways, as for instance the deliberate use of man's egocentricity which seems so subversive of freedom itself, embraces both the phenomenal and the transcendental worlds. In this sense, Kant is fundamentally different in the foundations of his anthropology from Hobbes and Hume and possibly even Rousseau, none of whom could conceptualize persons as able to act from anything other than desire, and thus for whom the idea of positive freedom is incoherent. Kant's belief in freedom as the 'inner principle of the

world', however allows him to see persons as at least potentially genuinely autonomous agents who can act against the sensuous inclinations and make the maxim of their actions reverence for the moral law itself. The end of history, for Kant, is thus not simply a particular political order characterized by republicanism and 'cosmopolitanism' as is usually claimed, but the both larger and much more problematic goal of persons as fully free. It is in this understanding of history's end that blends both the classical view of history with its emphasis on the rationality of history when understood within the patterns of naturalistic explanation such as growth and decay and the Christian view with its commitment to history as the process of salvation in which Nature, through God's providential ordering might participate.

All of this is not, however, without its difficulties. The relationship between freedom and Nature, for instance, is never sufficiently clear in that freedom seems to be vitiated by Nature's quite significant role in making him and by the blurring of Nature's end with man's end. While Kant wishes to claim that Nature's end is man as end this still leaves one puzzled as to whether man, in the final analysis remains in, above or merely alongside of Nature. Clearly Kant in some sense understands freedom as that historical development which can put man above Nature as ontologically superior, though this understanding is undermined by his seeming insistence that man's rational

capacities and thus his freedom, originates, at least to some extent, and develops within Nature. This difficulty is heightened by the fact that Nature and the moral world exhibit surprisingly similar conceptual structures in that both are governed by law, the one through natural law, the other through the moral law.

But this interpenetration of Nature and freedom which characterizes human persons also creates another type of problem in that it seems to mean that inappropriate teleological readings are allowed an almost axiomatic status. Kant, for instance, fails to provide us with good reasons for why Nature's 'splendid misery' might not be better understood as simply the actually blighted character of the world rather than as a means to freedom. Moreover, Kant never comes to terms with precisely how Nature achieves its ends. Though he frequently points to processes and results, he cannot account for how the processes are occurring nor provide convincing reasons as to why their alleged results should be considered as contrived rather than accidental.

The 'historical' strand of Kant's anthropology can best be understood then as one attempt on Kant's part to make sense of persons both in their natural context and in the context of freedom. Though there are a variety of aspects which contribute to human character, the most important, indeed, at times for Kant the only one, is freedom. Despite its central role, however, freedom is at once

extraordinarily resilient, yet exceptionally fragile. In the end it is perhaps much like a frail and seemingly insubstantial bird's nest built over a precipice - just a random collection of leaves, straw and bits of mud - yet put together in such a fashion that the lives which inhabit it hang safely over the abyss.

References

- ¹ I. Kant, On History, Trans. by L. Beck, R. Anchor, E. Fackenheim (Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 12.
- ² While there are a few articles that have dealt with Kant's anthropology in its philosophical dimensions, the only work which we have been able to discover which treats Kant's anthropology as important to his philosophy as a whole is F. Van De Pitte's. While arguing for the foundational character of Kant's theory of man, Van De Pitte is more interested in assessing the implications of the anthropology for the third Critique, than in establishing the philosophical credibility of the Anthropology itself and of drawing together Kant's developed theory of persons and demonstrating its connexion with his social and political theory and indeed, assessing its cogency. Van De Pitte, for instance, does not touch on Kant's key anthropological claim about man as an end in himself.
- ³ Saner, Kant's Political Thought, p. 1.
- ⁴ Kant, On History, p. 54.
- ⁵ L. Beck, in On History, vii.
- ⁶ See Kant, On History 'Conjectural Beginning', p. 60.
- ⁷ Kant, On History, p. 53.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid. pp. 54-55.
- ¹⁴ Ibid. p. 55.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. p. 54.
- ¹⁶ Ibid. p. 55.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. p. 56.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
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- ²² Ibid.
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Chapter Three

KANTIAN MAN AS END

Man, and in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself and not merely as means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. In all his actions, ... he must always be regarded at the same time as an end.

In Chapter Two we attempted to explicate the various dimensions of Kant's conception of persons, particularly as these were developed in his historical accounts about the development of men in culture within Nature. Central to each of these accounts was a conception of man which while recognizing his ambiguous intermediate role between Nature and Freedom, nonetheless concentrated on the development of his distinctive capacities for reason, freedom and morality, capacities which place him in one sense at least, outside of Nature as Nature's end. In one aspect then this first anthropological strand focuses as much, even if in a negative fashion, on a characterization of the natural order, because it is such an order which contributes to man's making, as it does on the human order. Though the central components of this view of persons are not contradictory, they are nonetheless not woven together as an explicit anthropological claim. For this explicit view of

persons, a view which attempts to bring the insights of the historical account into some conceptual order, we must turn to Kant's theory of man as an end in himself, a theory which provides the second and more formally philosophical strand of Kant's anthropology, for it is only there (with the possible exception of the teleological theory in the third Critique), that Kant attempts to draw together the threads of his various definitions.

While the concept of man as end in himself may well contain Kant's most compact and illuminating account of what he takes man to be, it is also a concept which resists easy explication.² One part of this difficulty stems from the fact that Kant develops the idea in a variety of places, and in virtually each instance the notion is supported by as slightly different sort of argument. The concept is difficult as well because Kant never appears certain what is to be made of the claim that man is an end. Though his commitment to the principles which he believes the idea supports is tenacious and his references to the idea itself eloquent, we are always left at the end of the discussion of this idea with at least the suspicion, and frequently more, that we have witnessed some metaphysical sleight of hand in which arguably weak premises have produced a surprisingly strong conclusion. Thus our explication of this idea must begin with three questions: first, what does Kant mean by man as end in himself? Second, how coherent is this concept? And, finally, what is the significance of the idea

in Kant's larger doctrine of man and indeed, in the critical philosophy as a whole? The answers to these questions are important not simply in the interests of furthering our understanding of Kant in the sense that the doctrine of man as end in himself provides the conceptual foundation for Kant's entire moral and social theory, but because Kant here is attempting to articulate and defend one of the West's most persistent if nonetheless ambiguous moral intuitions.

I

The concept of man as end in himself makes it most explicit and extended appearance in the Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals. There Kant maintains that "Man, and in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself and not merely as means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will. In all his actions, whether they are directed to himself or to other rational beings, he must always be regarded at the same time as an end."³ The idea of man as end in himself occurs within a discussion which attempts to answer the questions of whether "it is a necessary law for all rational beings that they should always judge their actions by such maxims that they themselves could will to serve as universal laws?"⁴ In order to answer this question Kant must first make sense of the notion of a will which determines itself in accordance with certain laws, and it is this explication that provides the foundation for the idea of man as end. The will, Kant suggests, is a faculty

determined by ends, ends which are either objective or subjective. Subjective ends which mark man's membership in the natural world are based on incentives and are inherently relative to a particular agent, while objective ends characterize man as a rational member of the realm of freedom in that they rest on 'motives valid for every rational being.'⁵ The ends of rational creatures are for the most part, Kant asserts, subjective inasmuch as they rest on incentives rather than motives, and it is this subjective status which gives them a merely extrinsic worth. 'And this worth cannot...afford any universal principles for all rational beings or valid and necessary principles for every volition.'⁶ Subjective ends are thus relative ends, extrinsically worthy and serving as grounds for hypothetical as opposed to categorical imperatives. A categorical imperative as the basis of the will's self-determination can only be grounded in something which itself has absolute worth, something which is an end in itself, and it is 'man, and, in general, every rational being' which exists as an end in himself.

Thus arises the distinction between subjective ends, which rest on incentives, and objective ends, which depend on motives valid for every rational being. Practical principles are formal when they disregard all subjective ends; they are material when they have subjective ends, and thus certain incentives, as their basis. The ends which a rational being arbitrarily proposes to himself as consequences of his action are material ends and are without exception only relative, for only their relation to a particularly constituted faculty of desire in the subject gives them their worth.

Kant's distinction between subjective and objective ends is somewhat obscure and may be reformulated as a distinction between the ends which rational agents pursue and the end which rational agents are. The ends which rational agents pursue are necessarily subjective inasmuch as they are inextricably rooted in the 'faculty of desire in the subject.'⁸ And the faculty of desire is so constituted as to be unable to 'afford any universal principles for all rational beings or valid and necessary principles for every volition.'⁹ Indeed, for Kant, desire by definition cannot provide principles of any sort, and most certainly not principles for all rational beings. Furthermore, the ends which rational agents pursue are realized through subjective means, means contingent on a particular agent's perception of how best to secure his ends and thus means not derivable from principles valid for all rational agents. Again, the ends which rational agents pursue rest on inclinations 'so lacking in absolute worth that the universal wish of every rational being must be...to free themselves completely from them.'¹⁰ Finally, and for Kant at least initially most decisively, the ends which rational agents pursue are unable to possess absolute worth precisely because they are ends which are pursued, ends which are produced through the actions of rational agents as opposed to ends which simply are independently of anything which may or may not be done. '...the worth of any objects to be obtained from our actions is at all times conditional. Beings whose existence does

not depend on our will but on nature, if they are not rational beings, have only a relative worth as means and are therefore called "things"....¹¹

While the ends which rational agents pursue are unable to possess absolute value, this is not the case with the end which rational agents are because this is an 'end' that is not produced by any being and thus not contingent on any being, but is an end in some sense (though Kant's doctrine about the gradual perfection of man appears to contradict this concept) already realized and hence immune from any sort of ontological change. (Kant elsewhere seems to undermine this reading of end in that he attributes man's status as end to God's creative action.)

Rational nature separates itself out from all other things by the fact that it sets itself an end. An end would thus be the matter of every good will. But in the idea of a will which is absolutely good - good without any qualifying condition (namely, that it should attain this or that end) - there must be complete abstraction from every end that has to be produced (as something which would make every will only relatively good). Hence, the end must here be conceived, not₂ as an end to be produced but as a self-existent end.

The ends which rational agents pursue are ends which they seek to produce and this makes them subjective ends, ends which are 'only relatively good.' But the ends which rational agents are has no connexion with human agency, or at least with human agency outside of the individual. The doctrine of objective ends is really then a doctrine about freedom. Rational agents are ends of absolute value because they are the only ends which are self-existent in the sense

of self-determined. This self-determination consists not only of freedom from any sort of external constraint but freedom as well from any sort of ontological determination. Man is absolutely valuable because he alone within the natural world exists and yet makes himself apart from nature. The doctrine of man as end in himself is thus a further reminder of the centrality within Kant's thought of the problem of freedom in that the notion of man as end can only be given a coherent formulation as it is founded on the idea of freedom.

But this distinction between the subjective ends which rational agents pursue and the objective end which rational agents are, points in another direction as well, namely, the conjunction of the epistemological and the moral. Kant believes that an inevitable consequence of being human is the ability to formulate the distinction between the objective and subjective points of view. This distinction is no mere epistemological puzzle but a distinction with moral consequences. The subjectivist is not simply epistemologically mistaken but, according to Kant, morally deficient. Human persons as objective ends ought to recognize all rational beings as fellow objective ends and this recognition ought to entail both the abandonment of any subjective ends which demean the value of any objective end and the progressive distancing of oneself from all that is subjective in one's perception of reality. In this sense the immoral point of view is the subjective point of view.

As Kant notes in the third Critique 'This...indicates a man of enlarged mind: if he detaches himself from the subjective personal conditions of his judgment, which cramp the minds of so many others, and reflects upon his own judgement from a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by shifting his ground to the standpoint of others).'¹³ Indeed, the Kantian doctrine of things in themselves might even allow of a coherent formulation if it is understood in this fashion as a distinction between a subjective point of view, which is a view from but one perspective, and thus a view of nothing more than appearances and the objective point of view, a view which in seeking to encompass numerous perspectives escapes the parochial and sees things in themselves.

Rational agents, then, Kant suggests, simultaneously have ends which they endeavour to realize, ends which qualify as ends only because of the status which rational beings confer upon them, ends which because they are not realized are inherently contingent, and are ends, ends which qualify as ends independently of the status conferred upon them by any rational being, ends which as self-existent are insusceptible to diminution. The ends which rational agents pursue and the end which rational agents are are not equivalent. The ends which rational agents pursue are characterized for the most part as relative and arbitrary originating as they do from the "particularly constituted faculty of desire" of a particular subject. Man as an end

admits of no contingency: man is a necessary end. There is thus a hierarchy of ends in which only the end which rational agents possess has absolute value. But how viable is this distinction between objective and subjective ends and the subsequent claim that only objective ends have absolute value?

In at least one sense, it appears extremely odd to speak about being an end in the manner that Kant uses objective end. We can certainly make perfect sense of the notion of having an end in the sense of some goal or purpose of action. Thus we can speak of X's end as maximizing the welfare of others in the sense of X's purpose, or the reasons for X's action are to maximize the welfare of others. Logically then, an end appears to be something that one has, something that is linked to rational volition, not something that one is.

This, however, is unacceptable to Kant not merely because he believes that this destroys the distinction between men and objects, but because the having of ends inevitably introduces a note of contingency into man's status as value in the sense that if an end is something that one has, in the sense that one has chosen to adopt it, then one could presumably choose not to adopt it. And Kant refuses to allow that man's value is thus contingent on being adopted as a value. This most fundamental value is not one which is created by man so much as discovered by man. Man might well have other values or ends, in the sense

of having chosen other values or purposes, but he does not produce or choose the value which he is because this value is self-existent.

This emphasis on man being an end irrespective of anyone's recognition of that status, of anyone to adopt him as end, is evident in the second part of Kant's phrase. Man is not simply an end, but an end in himself. Now it might be objected that there is nothing essential added by the phrase 'in himself.' Schopenhauer, it will be recalled, made precisely such an objection, arguing that end in itself was equivalent to friend in himself. It seems, however, that Kant's grammatical infelicity here is fashioned once again with a moral intention. Man as end in himself is for Kant but one more way to emphasize that man's status as end, man's value is not something that is external in at least two senses: it is not external in the sense of being derived from an authority outside of man and it is not external in the sense of being contingent on anything that a man does or does not do. Because man is an end in himself his value cannot be externally adjudicated on the basis of his actions. Such a radical rejection of all external determination of value derives in part from the noumena-phenomena distinction, in that it is man's noumenal character which is both fundamentally inaccessible to theoretical knowledge and yet somewhat curiously at the same moment open enough to be read as absolutely valuable in the sense of providing the basis for man's reason and freedom.

Indeed, it is only in man as noumenal that Kant can find a place to root man's absolute value which is free from any hint of self-delusion.

Now we have in the world beings of but one kind whose causality is teleological, or directed to ends, and which at the same time are beings of such a character that the law according to which they have to determine ends for themselves is represented by themselves as unconditioned and not dependent on anything in nature, but as necessary in itself. The being of this kind is man, but man regarded as noumenon. He is the only natural creature whose peculiar objective characterization is nevertheless such as to enable us to recognize in him a supersensible faculty -- his freedom--and to perceive both the law of the causality and the object of freedom which that faculty is able to set before itself as the highest end - the supreme good in the world.¹⁴

This reading of man as end in himself also occurs in other less expected places. In his Lectures on Ethics in a discussion about duties to animals, Kant notes that the question "Why does man exist?" is a meaningless question. 'Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. We can ask, "Why do animals exist?" But to ask, "Why does man exist?" is a meaningless question.'¹⁵ Kant makes a similar point in the Third Critique. 'Now it is not open to us in the case of man, considered as a moral agent,...to ask the further question: For what end...does he exist? His existence inherently involves the highest end - the end to which, as far as in him lies, he may subject the whole of nature....'¹⁶ The contrast is striking. Subjective ends are presumably subjective in part precisely because their status as ends is not secure in that it is always legitimate

even after according them the status of ends to raise the further question "Why do they exist?" But man is not an end in the sense that subjective ends are, that is an end whose status is conditioned by the natural environment and the volition of rational agents. Rather, he is an end in himself, an end whose value is absolute, as contrasted to the relative value of subjective ends, in that it derives from nothing external to himself. Man is thus an end who admits of no comparison with other so-called ends and about whom no further value queries (for what end does man exist?) are meaningful.

The distinction which Kant draws between subjective and objective ends may be understood in another sense as well. Christian theology, for example, holds that God is the self-existent and fully realized end which Kant calls objective, while man is that created, contingent end which Kant labels subjective. Man, for Kant, presumably shares God's self-existence and his absolute value as an end about whom it cannot be sensibly asked, Why does He exist? But given that the distinction between objective and subjective ends is at least arguable and that the notion of a hierarchy of ends is understandable, Kant's ascription of relative and absolute status within that hierarchy is yet inconsistent with important elements of the critical philosophy.

Kant, for instance, devalues subjective ends because they are allegedly based on the faculty of desire, as if this alone would disqualify them from having absolute worth.

And yet elsewhere he emphasizes that both desire and reason are given and enduring aspects of human nature. If the ascription of absolute worth is contingent on something that an end is rather than something which it produces or attains, then it is difficult to understand how desire, which is, on Kant's own admission, as conceptually primitive as reason, must render something ineligible for the status of absolute end.

Moreover, Kant's subsidiary argument that since all rational beings seek to free themselves from desires, desires cannot provide the basis for absolute value, is equally flawed. It is certainly not obvious that all rational beings seek to free themselves from desires and Kant can only establish this by defining rational as that which acts in opposition to desire.

Thirdly, elsewhere in the Foundations Kant admits that some ends are pursued both on the basis of desire and reason and this admission threatens the entire hierarchy of ends. If some end X is pursued both on the promptings of desire and reason, then it is impossible categorically to reject desire as a candidate for absolute value.

Fourthly, even if all rational beings sought to escape from desire this would not establish, on Kant's own criteria, its merely contingent value. The fact that any given rational agent pursues an end logically has nothing to do with the value of that end. Indeed, an absolute end is absolute not only in the sense that all other ends are

subordinate to it, but equally in the sense that its value obtains irrespective of its being recognized as absolute.

But Kant's claim about the absolute value of objective ends is also implausible in its assertion that objective ends are self-existent. Kant's contention appears to be incoherent in at least two senses. First, the existence of any given finite, rational *X* is clearly contingent on the decisions or at least actions of other temporally prior finite rational beings and is thus not self-caused. Moreover, any finite rational being existent in the world is, contra Kant, dependent not merely on will but in some sense on nature as well. Indeed, even the familiar two-worlds standpoint allows that man as phenomena is a member of the natural world. Kant himself suggests that man's rational nature did not exist from the first but was produced through a long interaction with instinct and nature. Second, the claim that objective ends are self-existent, non-productable and already realized contradicts Kant's other central ethical assertions. In the formal statement of the man as an end principle which comes almost directly after the argument for man as an objective end, Kant insists that one should 'Act that you treat humanity...always as an end.'¹⁷ Thus while Kant has insisted that man is an objective end because he cannot be produced by human action, he now suggests that humanity, which he takes to be equivalent to man and rational nature, either personally or in others can become an end of action.

More crucially, in his discussion of the good will and once more in his discussion of the problem of radical evil in humanity, Kant suggests that man's absolute value rests on his possession of a good will and that given man's membership in the phenomenal world the achievement of a good will is always problematic. According to these accounts then, man's moral condition, which is decisive for his status as man is not something which simply is, something which is already realized, but something which is very much the product of human action. Man cannot, it appears, have the status of objective end in the sense of self-existent where self-existent is read as not brought about by finite, rational agency. Hence, if Kant founds man's status as man on his capacity for morality and if he admits of a distinction between what man is and what man ought to be and allows that it is human action which moves man from is to ought, then his characterization of human beings as objective ends in the sense of ends not brought about by any human action is inconsistent. It is open to Kant, of course, to argue that in the last analysis it is not human but divine action which assures man's status as self-existent end, for it is only through the supplement of divine grace that man becomes the moral creature he is destined to be. We shall discuss this conception of man as end later, but it should be noted that it is doubtful whether this manoeuvre can succeed in that it simply substitutes divine for human agency in the production of man

as moral being, and man as objective end possesses absolute value precisely because there is no external agency involved in his being.

It appears then that Kant wishes to have it both ways. On the one hand he maintains that man as end in himself possesses absolute value because he is an objective end, because his rational nature is self-existent and immutable and not the product of an agency outside of himself. We have suggested that this argument does not work in that man's existence as a rational being is contingent on the decision of some previous rational agent (or even some previous non-rational being in Kant's sense), and since Kant appears to accept the Biblical account of man's origin in God's creative act. Moreover, Kant's account of the development of man as a rational being suggests that his rational nature does not appear full blown, but rather evolves in interaction with desire shepherded by nature.

On the other hand Kant suggests in his discussion of the kingdom of ends and elsewhere not only that man, rational nature, and humanity can be made the end of an action but that they are radically incomplete and can in some sense be 'made.' We are thus left with the paradoxical assertion that man is an end though he has not yet obtained his end, suggesting that what Kant really means is that man is a potential end. But on this reading there is no essential connexion between the end which man is, the ends which man pursues, and man's end for the claim that man as

objective end possesses absolute value is the claim that this value is unaffected by anything that man either does or does not do. Any it^{is} precisely such a connexion - between man's end in the sense of his absolute value, the ends which he does pursue and the Kingdom of Ends which is his goal - that Kant wishes to establish.

But even if we were to allow that Kant's formulation of the subjective/objective ends distinction were coherent, and indeed, that it were consistent with the central tenets of the critical philosophy, we would yet have no answer to the question as to why self-determination is alone valuable. When Kant argues that rational beings are objective ends in the sense that they are self-existent or wholly self-determining and that it is this which makes them absolutely valuable, which makes them ends in themselves, he assumes that the capacity for self-determination is absolutely valuable. The argument is thus: (1) man's status as absolutely valuable is founded on that which is unique to rational beings, that which distinguishes rational agents from animals and objects and (2) what is unique to rational agents in general and to man in particular is self-determination. But why is this the case? The only sort of answer which Kant offers is that self-determination is absolutely valuable because it is unique to rational beings. But this contention in turn raises two further problems.

It might be argued, first, that freedom is not the only characteristic which is unique to human rational agents.

Though this entire area is decidedly controversial, other, at least plausible candidates for unique rational capacities might include prehensile ability, aesthetic appreciation, and genocide. Perhaps then (1) should be amended to Man's status as absolutely valuable is founded on that which is essentially unique to rational beings. This, however, suggests a second difficulty, namely, by what criteria does one distinguish the essentially from the accidentally or contingently unique? Indeed, what does it mean to say that something is essentially unique to a rational being?

Presumably the essentially unique is that without which a rational agent would not be the being that he is. And Kant, of course, believes that inescapably part of being rational is being self-determining. Thus to posit an essentially rational being who is not self-determining is to contradict oneself. But put in this fashion, Kant's argument appears to reduce to the truism that what is unique to rational beings is their rationality. More serious however, is the fact that it is not at all obvious that the denial of self-determination is a denial of rationality. While the abandonment of the notion of self-determination might render much of our moral language unintelligible, it need not impair at all such rational capacities as the formulation of rules or the recognition of logical contradictions or the exercise of foresight. At the very most Kant's argument might prove that without positing some degree of self-determination one could not make sense of all

aspects of rationality. But rationality need not obviously, as Kant assumes, entail freedom or self-determination and hence morality. Kant would, of course, not allow that even rule-making lies outside of the scope of rationality read as self-determination. Implicit for him in the concept of rule-formulation is the notion of what it means to either accept or reject a rule, and this is the 'ratio cognoscendi of freedom' Kant notes that this connexion between rule-making and freedom when he argues that freedom 'is the necessary hypothesis of all rules, and consequently of any employment of the understanding.'¹⁸

Kant's attempt to determine the basis for self-determination's absolute value ultimately fails because it appears to construe the problem as one that is merely internal to the critical philosophy. It is this that produces the unhelpful suggestion that what is unique to rational agents is rationality in the sense of self-determination. And it is this that leads to the suspicion that Kant simply assumes his most basic contention - the absolute value of freedom. If Kant is to find an acceptable answer to the question of why self-determination confers absolute value on rational agents he must venture outside of the assumed and tidy equivalence of rational-free-moral.

The external justification for the absolute value of self-determination and with it man's status as end in himself assumes three forms. In the first instance, Kant appears to suggest that the absolute value of self-

determination is a primary moral intuition. Such intuitions he appears to suggest at some points are by nature insusceptible to further elucidation or justification: they are simply 'seen' in the sense of being self-evident. The regress of justifications must, so it is argued, end somewhere, and self-determination as an absolute value is simply a foundational intuition. The intuitional character of self-determination is thus established by its baffling metaphysical character. Kant notes in Religion that '...we understand perfectly well what freedom is, practically (when it is a question of duty), whereas we cannot without contradiction even think of wishing to understand theoretically the causality of freedom (or its nature).'¹⁹ We thus accord self-determination the status of primary intuition because its perplexing theoretical character means that its position as absolute cannot otherwise be established.

The theoretical difficulties preventing an adequate elucidation of the notion of freedom are also mentioned in the Foundations where the task of explaining freedom is compared with pure reason explaining how it can be practical.

We are unable to explain anything unless we can bring it under laws which can have an object given in some possible experience. Freedom, however, is a mere Idea: its objective validity can in no way be exhibited by reference to laws of nature and consequently cannot be exhibited in any possible experience. Thus the idea of freedom can never admit of full comprehension, or indeed of insight, since it can never by any analogy have an example falling under it. It holds only as a

necessary presupposition of reason in a being who believes himself to be conscious of a will....²⁰

Inasmuch as freedom is a 'mere Idea' we cannot expect that its objective validity can be demonstrated in terms of the natural world, by "any possible experience" that would unravel its intrinsically valuable character. Rather, freedom's values can at best be only presuppositional, it must function as simply a necessary condition not just for moral experience but for coherently conceptualizing human persons.

The famous passage at the end of the second Critique which speaks of the awe and admiration with which we contemplate the starry heavens above and the moral law within appears to hint at the fact that both the moral law and freedom as associated 'directly with the consciousness of my own existence',²¹ are intuitions which may be articulated and defended within a value system but are externally unjustifiable. Elsewhere in the second Critique Kant pursues a similar argument when he suggests that rational agents are intuitively conscious of certain things: the moral law, the freedom of the will, the law of autonomy. In the 'Deduction of the Principles of Pure Practical Reason' he notes that 'the moral law is given, as an apodictically certain fact...of pure reason, a fact of which we are a priori conscious....'²² The primary difficulty with this sort of justification for the absolute value of freedom is that it seems decidedly inappropriate to read Kant's rigorously rational system as in the end founded on

nothing more than self-validating intuitions about the foundational value of freedom.

A second and initially more promising approach is to suggest that self-determination might arguably possess absolute value in that it reveals something of man's noumenal character. While pure reason 'was successful to the extent that it established with certainty the concept of noumen, i.e., it established the possibility, indeed, the necessity of thinking of them',²³ the moral law and with it self-determination

does provide a fact absolutely inexplicable from any data of the world of sense or from the whole compass of the theoretical use of reason, and this fact points to a pure intelligible world, indeed, it defines it positively and²⁴ enables us to know something of it, namely a law.

While Kant's official position is that one cannot claim to know that a causa noumenon exists, much less what its character is, this official position is continually undermined by the alleged 'accessions' which practical reason provides for speculative reason. Thus the moral law as the ratio cognoscendi of freedom and freedom as the ratio essendi of the moral law are absolutely valuable inasmuch as they suggest that man's noumenal character is, to wit, spontaneous and autonomous.

This argument is, however, inadequate in that it is circular. To suggest that self-determination is absolutely valuable because it reveals man's noumenal character as self-determined is to suggest that self-determination is valuable because it is self-determination. Inasmuch as it

is the noumenal which guarantees man's freedom it is scarcely appropriate to argue that this freedom is valuable in that it enables one to understand the noumenal.

A third justification for the absolute status of freedom arises out of Kant's claim that self-determination is a characteristic of the 'author of the world' (Closely allied to this claim is the argument that man is an end in himself because he is God's creature.) Kant's conception of the relation of religion and morality is immensely complicated (for a fuller explication of this relationship see Chapter 4), a complication occasioned in no small measure by his contradictory explications of both religion and morality. In Religion Kant maintains that

so far as morality is based upon the conception of man as a free agent who, just because he is free, binds himself through his reason to unconditioned laws, it stands in need neither of the idea of another being over him; for him to apprehend his duty.²⁵

Kant makes the same point about the primacy of the moral law, even in relation to God, in his Lectures on Ethics.

Men have derived morality from the divine will because the moral laws are expressed in the form "thou shalt" and this led to the belief that a third being must have promulgated the command. But whilst it is true that the moral laws are commands, and whilst they may be commandments of the divine will, they do not originate in the commandment. God has commended this or that because it is a moral law and because His will coincides with the moral law...Moral laws can be right without a third being....²⁶

This and similar statements suggest that Kant believes that the moral law and with it freedom do not gain their value from God's possession of them but rather have an absolute value independently of God's existence. From this account

it would appear that the moral law and self-determination are the absolute principles and ground of the supersensible world and thus that which gives ultimate coherence and purpose to the phenomenal world. God is necessary finally only as the facilitator of the moral law through assuring the ultimate conjunction of virtue and happiness.

Despite these arguments, Kant also indicates in a variety of places that there is an 'author of the world' who far from simply endorsing certain already existing values is the actual ground and sustainer of both man and the moral order. This position, in fact, might be argued to form the basis of Religion, the last of Kant's systematic works. The claim, however, is not to be found in Religion alone. In the second Critique Kant argues, for instance, that 'the supreme cause of nature....is a being which is the cause (and consequently the author) of nature through understanding and will, i.e., God.'²⁷ And in a longer passage from the second Critique describing God's attributes Kant writes

He is the only holy, the only blessed and the only wise being, because these concepts of themselves imply unlimitedness. By the arrangement of these He is thus the holy lawgiver (and creator), the²⁸ beneficent ruler (and sustainer), and the just judge.

Moreover, in the Conjectural Beginning of Human History, Kant implicitly accepts the Biblical account of man's origin in God's creative act. While Kant's arguments for an author of the world are varied, they all centre on the inexplicability of experience, of the facts about the world

without the postulate of a supreme unity or ground of reality. The conceptual aspect of the universe, the purposiveness that is attributed to nature, the "facts of the moral life" can only be ultimately explained, Kant suggests, as they are unified in a supreme ground of the universe. And if this is indeed the case, then self-determination is an absolute value only inasmuch as it is constituted as such by the 'author of the world.'

The difficulties presented by this line of argument, despite its initial attractiveness, are substantial. For one thing there is the textual inconsistency in which certain texts support the more rigorous Kantian position that morality is a reality which is independent even of God. Moreover, God functions in Kant's system on a somewhat slender epistemological warrant that allows him the status of a mere postulate of practical reason and it seems unlikely that Kant would wish to justify so central a feature of the critical philosophy on epistemic fragility of a postulate. Finally, even if we were to allow that Kant's best case for the absolute status of self-determination were that it was part of God's character, this position is still insecure inasmuch as one might quite legitimately inquire what it is about being constitutive of God's character that makes self-determination valuable.

II

Thus far we have examined Kant's argument for man as end only as it is founded on his distinction between subjective and objective ends. To the extent that the doctrine of man as end is in fact based on this sort of distinction and the arguments, both those narrowly advanced within the context of the distinction and certain wider considerations drawn from the entire range of the critical philosophy, which Kant sets forth in favour of the distinction, the doctrine is not anywhere near as strong as Kant supposes. But Kant appears to have another line of argument in behalf of the contention that man is an absolute end, an argument that occurs, albeit implicitly, somewhat earlier in the Foundations than the famous passage which we have cited.

At the beginning of the First Section Kant notes that 'Nothing in the world--indeed nothing even beyond the world--can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a good will.'²⁹ Here then, at first glance at least, is a different answer to the question as to what it is about man as end which distinguishes him from other ends and thus confers upon him absolute value. Neither the 'talents of mind' nor the 'gifts of fortune', that is neither accidents nor attainments, Kant insists, provide the justification for absolute worth. This is true because all accidents of birth or attainment, however much they might appear to constitute a part of the inner worth of

the person' are not uniformly good in that without a good will they 'can become extremely bad.'³⁰

Intelligence, wit, judgment, and the other talents of the mind, however they may be named, or courage, resoluteness, and perseverance as qualities of temperament are doubtless in many respects good and desirable. But they can become extremely bad and harmful if the will, which is to make use of these gifts of nature and which in its special constitution is called character is not good. It is the same with the gifts of fortune. Power, riches, honor, even health, general well-being, and the contentment with one's condition which is called happiness make for pride and even arrogance if there is not a good will to correct their influence on the mind and on its principles of action, so³¹ as to make it universally conformable to its end.

Men's absolute worth is thus to be found only in the possession of good will, a will whose very volition is determined by moral rules valid for itself and every rational agent. This good will is in the fullest sense conceivable the law-respecting will (in that it has exclusive regard for the universal ability of its maxims) and the law-respecting will must of necessity be a rational will.

For all these effects (agreeableness of condition, indeed even the promotion of the happiness of others) could be brought about through other causes and would not require the will of a rational being, while the highest and unconditional good can be found only in such a will. Therefore, the pre-eminent good can consist only in the conception of the law in itself (which can be present only in a rational being) so far as his conception and not the hoped-for effect is the determining ground of the will.³²

The idea that man as an end with absolute value is contingent on man as possessing a good will is also a part of Kant's discussion of the realm of ends and man's dignity. There he suggests that "That which constitutes the condition

under which alone something can be an end in itself does not have mere relative worth, i.e., a price, but an intrinsic worth, i.e., dignity.'³³ But dignity is attributable to only two things, morality and humanity insofar as it possesses morality (the good will). 'Thus morality and humanity, so far as it is capable of morality, alone have dignity.'³⁴ Man's dignity, man's status as end is contingent on his possession of the good will. Kant thus establishes man as end not on the basis of any object in the world of sense, which would be the case if he were to rely on the talents of mind or the gifts of fortune as the foundation for man as end, but on man's self-chosen conformity to the moral law, a capacity which signals man's distinctiveness from everything empirical and contingent. This theme is echoed too, in the third Critique where Kant in the section titled 'Ethico-Theology' attempts to come to terms with the difficult question of the 'ordering of ends' and man's place as absolute end within such an order. Kant suggests that the world may be viewed as a 'consistent whole of interconnected ends, and as a system of final causes'³⁵ only if man as a 'moral being' is acknowledged as the 'end of creation'. And man obtains this status of moral being not through his 'cognitive faculty, that is, theoretical reason',³⁶ but only through the possession of the good will.

On the contrary it is the worth which he alone can give to himself, and which consists in what he does - in the manner in which and the principles upon which he acts in the freedom of his faculty of desire, and not as a link in the chain of nature. In other words a good will is that whereby man's existence can alone possess

an absolute worth, and in relation to which the existence of the world can have a final end.³⁷

But is this approach to the question of man as end really that different than Kant's initial formula which concentrates on man's powers of self-determination in the face of natural necessity? We would suggest that it is not because of the equivalence or what John Silber calls the interpenetration of reason, freedom and morality in Kant.³⁸ In the first formulation of man as end, man was seen to be absolutely valuable because of his status as objective end, a claim that reduced on analysis to the claim that man is valuable because of his capacities for freedom. But it is precisely the capacity, and, indeed, the exercise of freedom which constitutes Kant's richest sense of rationality. Kant, to be sure, uses reason in a variety of senses aside from the central distinction between pure and practical reason, and his most frequent use is reason in its structural dimension, the form of correct thinking which undergirds all of experience, whether scientific, moral, or aesthetic. This conception of reason should not lead us to neglect reason in what might be called its moral sense in which reason either reveals or in fact is man's autonomy in choosing ends independently of the determination of his natural desires. The rational agent is thus quite simply the agent who sets his ends in accordance with the moral law rather than the promptings of nature and to set one's ends in accordance with the moral law is to act freely, to be self-determinative. It is also to have a good will. Kant's

distinction between the various types of reason might be cast in a slightly different way by speaking about the instrumental and the intrinsic use of reason. Quite often reason functions to choose the 'best' means to some end. Here we do A because reason suggests that it is the surest way to achieve our goal of B. Reason in this sense is purely a means, purely instrumental in bringing about some end. In moral action, however, reason functions in a different fashion. It is not simply that reason sets the end, but within the context of moral action reason itself is the end for which we act in that it manifests our abilities as self-determining beings. Reason in its moral employment is thus intrinsically valuable because it fulfills man's end as a free being.

Thus Kant's claim is that all men qua men are rational and it is this which entails their absolute value. But this is really the basis of the second formulation of man's value given the equivalence of rationality and the good will. Both formulations of man's absolute end locate value in rationality and the 'second' formulation thus shares the same problem as the first, the inability to demonstrate a convincing universal connexion between rationality and absolute value so as to justify the claim that all men are absolute ends.

But there is a more substantial difficulty than this, for if we are to accept this reading as to what it is that gives man his absolute value as end we are immediately

confronted with a contradiction in terms of Kant's latter formulations of the idea of man as end in himself. For instance, if man's absolute value is contingent on his possession of a good will, then quite obviously the absence of such a will in any particular man, that, is the possession of a bad will, deprives him of his absolute worth, of his status as end in himself. The bad will, Kant contends, is the heteronomous will, the will which allows the objects of the world of sense to determine its laws. The heteronomous will is thus by definition not a rational will inasmuch as its causality is not self-determined but an instance of the causality which governs the natural world. It is in effect not a will at all. The consequences of Kant's contentions that man's absolute value is contingent on the possession of the good will and that the rational and the volitional are equivalent are two-fold. First, genuinely immoral actions chosen and effected by free and responsible agents are logically impossible. If volition and rationality are genuine only inasmuch as they are moral, then immorality cannot be a product of genuine rationality. The purposeful bad will, it appears is a logical contradiction. Second, the being who lacks a good will which is to say the being who lacks reason, and by implication freedom and morality, ceases, for Kant, to be a person. The good will is thus not a criteria for a particular sort of personhood, but for personhood of any sort. Those beings who lack a good will are not persons but

necessarily 'irrational beings.'³⁹ Man loses his status as person precisely because the good will - which is the will which acts in conformity to the universal character or form of law - is the only will that can be genuinely free and rational, that is, possess both the necessary and sufficient conditions for personhood. Humanity's absolute value, its worth lies in its pursuit of freedom's perfection which is nothing other than bringing oneself under the law of freedom and thereby escaping the domination of the inclinations. 'Now morality is the condition under which alone a rational being can be an end in itself, because only through it is it possible to be a legislative member in the realm of ends.'⁴⁰ The bad will then really brings one into contradiction with oneself, for it places the pursuit of personal, subjective ends, ends originating in self-love, above the universal character of the law and, the pursuit of our rational end, freedom through the good will, and more importantly, contradiction with the moral character of the world as well. And it is this which destroys our personhood, and even, Kant at times suggests reduces us to the status of animals.

He who subjects his person to his inclinations, acts contrary to the essential end of humanity; for a free being he must not be subjected to inclination but ought to determine them in the exercise of his freedom; and being a free agent he must have a rule, which is the essential end of humanity. In the case of animal as inclinations are already determined by subjectively compelling factors; in their case therefore, disorderliness is impossible. But if man gives free rein to his inclinations, he sinks lower than an animal because he then lives in a state of disorder which does not exist among animals. A man is then in

contradiction with the essential ends of humanity in his own person, and so with himself.⁴¹

Given Kant's view of evil and the tenuous sovereignty of reason over desire it is quite probable that the class of rational agents, that is to say the class of good wills would at any time be quite small. The problem is given a further twist in that Kant occasionally claims that one cannot know whether any being is in possession of a good will in that our ascriptions of responsibility and thus of freedom are tied in the end to the unenlightening empirical character of man.

The real morality of actions, their merit or guilt, even that of our own conduct, thus remains entirely hidden from us. Our imputations can refer only to the empirical character. How much of this character is ascribable to the pure effect of freedom, how much to mere nature, that is, to faults of temperament for which there is no responsibility, or to its happy constitution...can never be determined; and upon it therefore no perfectly just judgements can be passed.⁴²

Perhaps this contradiction could be solved by suggesting that Kant's contention that it is the good will which provides the basis of man's absolute value is an aberration of the Foundations only and should simply be discounted as part of Kant's mature theory. But this claim about the good will as the basis of man's value is not to be found only within the Foundations. In the third Critique Kant insists that 'only in man, and only in him as the individual being to whom the moral law applies, do we find unconditional legislation in respect of ends.'⁴³ This 'unconditional legislation in respect of ends' is the good

will and 'a goodwill is that whereby man's existence can alone possess an absolute worth....'⁴⁴ And yet Kant also maintains that 'Man, and in general, every rational being exists as an end in himself....'⁴⁵

This conflict in Kant's claims about man's status as an end with absolute value has not gone unnoticed among those who have sought to explicate the doctrine of man as end.

Hardy Jones, for instance, notes that

On the one hand, he appears to hold that only persons with a good will have unconditioned value. On the other hand, he says that each man, by virtue of his possession of a will, is an end-in-himself. The latter is clearly the more plausible interpretation of the principle of personality, for this principle applies to our treatment of all men: we are permitted to treat no man--~~even~~ one who is morally unworthy -- as a mere means.⁴⁶

But why is the latter reading 'clearly the more plausible interpretation'? The only reason Jones gives is that this principle applies to our treatment of all men, but this obviously begs the question for it is precisely whether the principle does apply to all men that is at issue.

Perhaps Kant's position then is not that man's absolute value is contingent on the actual possession of a good will but on the potential possession of a good will. One is, as it were, admitted on probationary status into the realm of absolute value, with judgement reserved until one's capacities for realizing a good will can be reasonably ascertained. Absolute value as potentiality then, it might be argued, is entirely reasonable in that by according one the opportunity to realize a good will not yet existent it

recognizes the obvious fact that good wills are progressively attained rather than instantaneously created. The difficulty, of course, with such an argument, a difficulty which seems to beset all potentiality arguments, is how to in fact make any sense of potentiality so that we may in fact say, for instance, that X does not possess a good will now, but he has such dispositions that we fully expect him to become such a will in the future.

Now Kant develops his conception of the will in two stages and it is crucial for understanding what he means by the good will and indeed the potentially good will as the basis for man as an end-in-himself to recall that in the Foundations the will is conceived of quite differently from its subsequent appearance in the second Critique.

While the concept of the good will appeared at the beginning of the First section (Foundations), Kant postpones a discussion of the will in general until the Second section where the idea is introduced in the context of an account of lawfulness.

Everything in nature works according to laws. Only a rational being has the capacity of acting according to the conception of laws, i.e., according to principles. This capacity is will. Since reason is required for the derivation of actions from laws, will is nothing else than practical reason.⁴⁷

A similar definition begins the Third section. 'As will is a kind of causality of living beings so far as they are rational, freedom would be that property of this causality by which it can be effective independently of foreign causes determining it, just as natural necessity is the property of

all irrational beings....'⁴⁸ From these definitions which speak of 'this capacity' and a 'kind of causality' it is easy, though nonetheless incorrect, to conclude that Kant conceives of the will as a separate capacity or faculty of the self. Thus it appears to be an open question as to whether any particular self has this capacity or faculty of will and whether, if he does, the will is free or determined. The will, however, for Kant is not so much something that a rational being has, it is something however curious the assertion may appear that a rational being is, in the sense of cannot be without. The two assertions that 'only a rational being has the capacity of acting according to the conception of laws' and 'since reason is required for the derivation of actions from laws, will is nothing else than practical reason' render reason and will equivalent. Rationality for Kant is acting according to principles. Kant makes the equivalence explicit when he contrasts the absence of volition, the determination by natural necessity which is the 'property of all irrational beings' so far as they are rational. Kant's meaning is thus unaltered if we substitute willing being for rational being so that the definition of will reads: 'Only a willing being has the capacity of acting according to the conception of laws.... This capacity is reason.' All rational beings are thus volitional and all volitional beings are rational. Indeed, Kant would claim even more, namely, genuinely rational=genuinely volitional=genuinely free-moral.

Statements then which appear to make reason and volition distinct such as when Kant speaks of the 'concept of the will of a rational being',⁴⁹ or when he suggests that the 'will is thought of as a faculty of determining itself in accordance with the conception of certain laws',⁵⁰ need only to be placed in context to be seen as confirmations of the equivalence of volition and rationality. Indeed, the claim that the will is thought of as a faculty of determining itself to action is preceded by a section in which it is made clear that it is 'the possibility of reason's...determining conduct',⁵¹ which is being investigated.

Kant's claim at least in the Foundations about the inter-relationship of will, rationality and personhood is thus that the good will is the rational and autonomous will and to be a person is to be a rational will. If we wish to reduce Kant's claim about the absolute value of persons as ends from the claim that such value is contingent on the present possession of a good will to the assertion that such value is contingent on the potentiality of possessing a good will, or the potential really of being a person, then we must enquire as to what it is to be a potentially rational or good will. At the outset it should be remembered that the coherence of this notion of potential personhood while of itself a necessary condition for allowing as plausible 'Kant's' claim that absolute value is possessed by the class of the potentially rational, those with potentially good

wills, is nonetheless not a sufficient condition for this claim, as not only must the concept of potentially rational be viable, but we must have, as well, sufficient warrant for believing that most persons are potentially rational and that a substantial majority of the potentially rational do in fact finally attain rationality. This is true simply because it is our expectations of future moral action, of future status as good will that provides the only basis for our present inclusion of the obviously bad-willed within the realm of absolute value.

What then does it mean to be potentially rational, to be a potentially good will? Inasmuch as Kant never raises this question explicitly we must infer what potential rationality is like from his concept of minimal rationality, a concept which he explicates in his 'maxims of common human understanding' in the third Critique.⁵² Since it is very often claimed that the rationality necessary for moral action is not a particularly refined or elegant sort, but a rationality that is so very minimal as to be at once available to the most subtle and the very simple, it is well to notice carefully Kant's exposition of what this common human understanding is.

Common human understanding ... is looked upon as the least we can expect from any one claiming the name of man, as therefore the doubtful honour of having the name of common sense ... bestowed upon it However, by the name sensus communis is to be understood the idea of a public sense, i.e. a critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account (a priori) of the mode of representation of every one else, in order, as it were, to weight its judgement with the collective reason of mankind, and thereby avoid the illusion

arising from subjective and personal conditions which could readily be taken for objective, an illusion that would exert a prejudicial influence upon its judgement. This is accomplished by weighing the judgement, not so much with actual, as rather with the merely possible, judgements of others, and by putting ourselves in the position of every one else, as the result of a mere abstraction from the limitations which contingently affect our own estimate.⁵³

From this notion of common human understanding, Kant deduces three maxims.

(1) to think for oneself; (2) to think from the standpoint of every one else; (3) always to think consistently. The first is the maxim of unprejudiced thought, the second that of enlarged thought, the third that of consistent thought. The first is the maxim of a never-passive reason. To be given to such passivity, consequently to heteronomy of reason, is called prejudice; and the greatest of all prejudices is that of fancying nature not to be subject to rules which the understanding by virtue of its own essential law lays at its basis, i.e. superstition. Emancipation from superstition is called enlightenment.... For the condition of blindness into which superstition puts one, which it as much as demands from one as an obligation, makes the need of being led by others, and consequently the passive state of the reason, pre-eminently conspicuous. As to the second maxim...this...still indicates a man of enlarged mind: if he detaches himself from the subjective personal conditions of his judgement, which cramp the minds of so many others, and reflects upon his own judgement from a universal standpoint (which he can only determine by shifting his ground to the standpoint of others). The third maxim - that, namely, of consistent thought - is the hardest of attainment, and is only attainable by the union of both the former, and after constant attention to them has made one at home in their observance. We may say: the first of these is the maxim of understanding, the second⁵⁴ that of judgement, the third that of reason.

These three maxims also appear in the Anthropology in the midst of a discussion about understanding, though there they are given as 'precepts' for attaining 'wisdom'.⁵⁵ Thus to count someone as potentially rational is to be able to assert that he has the capacity, latent and as yet

undeveloped to think for himself, 'to make use of his understanding without direction from another'⁵⁶ as Kant notes in another context. Kant characterizes thinking for oneself as 'never-passive' thinking and contrasts this with reason which is heteronomouS, that is reason not subject to the autonomous law of freedom, reason in nature. Thinking for oneself is thus autonomous thought, and autonomous thought is that which freely sets ends and means, that 'which acts in accordance with concepts.'⁵⁷

Kant's point is not that all thinking is autonomous in the sense that it is purposive. He assumes that all thinking is by definition purposive in that it 'acts in accordance with concepts'⁵⁸ and that it is directed to some end.

Thus definitive of thinking is a purposiveness which issues in actions directed toward the realization of C by means of A and B. In this sort of thinking, reason is not an end itself, it is merely an instrument for realizing in the most efficient way certain ends, ends which reflect our status in the phenomenal world and which are for the most part not chosen. Purposive thought in this sense is hence not analytically thinking for oneself in that its ends are externally defined. In most senses, such thought is passive or heteronomous. In contrast, active thought, or thinking for oneself, or what can be called autonomous thought is thought which is purposive, but unconditionally purposive in that not merely its means but its ends as well are self-

determined and free from any external influence save for the considerations of objectivity and consistency. It is in this sense that thinking for oneself has an absolute and indeed a priori worth because autonomous thought is thought which realizes man's rational nature - which is an 'end in itself.' In thinking for oneself, reason or 'rational nature' and thereby freedom, positive freedom is affirmed.

But to count someone as potentially rational is also to be able to assert that he has the capacity, again latent and as yet undeveloped, but nonetheless present, to think from the standpoint of every one else. This in a characteristically Kantian fashion involves the moral quality, indeed for Kant, the chief moral quality of objectivity, or as he calls it here, the 'idea of a public sense', the 'critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account...of the mode of representation of every one else, in order to weigh its judgement with the collective reason of mankind....'⁵⁹ Rationality then entails not only autonomous thought, but thought which is possessed of cognitive empathy in that it is devoid of the illusions of subjectivity arising from contingent situations and reflects upon its own judgements from a 'universal standpoint.'⁶⁰ Autonomy is checked by objectivity. Seen in a different way, one might in fact argue that autonomy and objectivity merge in the sense that the autonomy which Kant speaks about is the autonomy from the determination of one's actions by the principle of self-love, the autonomy which structures

its judgements according to the universality of the moral law. This fusion of autonomy and objectivity, of thinking for oneself and thinking from the standpoint of everyone else also leads to and joins with the third condition of rationality - consistent thought. This is the maxim of reason that is the 'hardest of attainment' in that it is only 'attainable by the union of both the former.' Although Kant simply mentions this maxim without elaboration, it is clear in terms of the progressive joining together of these three notions that the consistency that he has in mind can only be the consistency of the categorical imperative which provides the law of freedom. Here then freedom is not simply the negative freedom involved in setting ends, but the positive freedom of the objectivity gained through commitment to the universality of the categorical imperative.

Despite its apparently incidental quality, and that fact that it has gone largely unnoticed by students of Kant, we wish to suggest that in this formula of common human understanding we have at once the most illuminating and most plausible interpretation of man as an end of absolute value in the sense that it joins together Kant's most important insights about the nature of persons.

In what ways, then, does this reading of man as absolute end in the context of common human understanding illuminate Kant's entire conception of persons? The full answer to this question must await Chapter Four, but for now

it will suffice to note that through tying man's status as end to the conception of a good will, Kant provides the basis both in theory and practice for radical evil, the willing quite literally of nature rather than freedom which threatens to destroy everything about man - reason, freedom and morality - that Kant considers absolutely valuable. The recognition of man as only potentially rational, as only potentially possessing the good will thus corrects Kant's perhaps overly sanguine view of human prospects while at the same time pushing him the direction of a modified form of Christian theism.

The key to this notion of man as potential end derived from the maxims of human understanding turns on the ideas of reason and morality read as objectivity and autonomy being both the necessary and sufficient conditions of personhood. Persons are those beings, unique in the natural world, who can free themselves from their cognitive and moral egocentricity - what Kant refers to as the 'maxim of self-love' and see the world and themselves from the most general and comprehensive, that is to say the most objective position available. This does not mean that freedom is no longer Kant's prime value, but rather that freedom in its fullest sense - epistemic and moral autonomy derived from the universal structure of law itself - is objectivity. Self-love - the 'propensity to make the subjective determining grounds of one's choice into an objective determining ground of the will in general'⁶¹ is the main

source of man's failure to become an end of absolute value in that it is that which renders moral objectivity and moral autonomy impossible. Self-love makes genuine thinking, genuine freedom, genuine objectivity and hence - genuine personhood - impossible, for it abrogates unprejudiced thought, enlarged thought and consistent thought simultaneously. The possession of what Kant calls a 'public sense' the 'critical faculty which in its reflective act takes account....of the mode of representation of every one else, in order, ... to weight its judgement with the collective reason of mankind...' ⁶² is impossible for self-love destroys our ability for 'putting ourselves in the position of everyone else' and enthrones rather than checks the illusions which arise from 'subjective and personal conditions.' As the second Critique puts it

We find...our nature as sensuous beings so characterized that the material of the faculty of desire (objects of the inclination...) first presses upon us; and we find our pathologically determined self, although by its maxims it is wholly incapable of giving universal laws, striving to give its pretension priority and original to make them acceptable as first and original claims, just as if it were our entire self. ⁶³

Only the moral law, it seems can 'exclude the influence of self-love from the highest practical principle' ⁶⁴ and check 'self-conceit' since the 'idea of the moral law deprives self-love of its influence and self-conceit of its delusion....' ⁶⁵ We find the same damning indictment of self-love, of moral egocentricity in the Anthropology where Kant speaks of the 'moral egoist' as the 'man who limits all

ends to himself, sees no use in anything except what is useful to him and, as a eudaemonist, locates the supreme determining ground of his will merely in utility and his own happiness, not in the thought of duty.'⁶⁶ In contrast to this is the objectivity of viewing the world from the broadest perspective, what Kant describes as 'pluralism' that is, the attitude of not being occupied with oneself as the whole world, but regarding and conducting oneself as a citizen of the world.'⁶⁷

But the connexion here between self-love and autonomy and objectivity is not merely a negative one in that it denies one a particular perspective from which to view and act in the world - one's own narrow interests - for properly considered, autonomy and objectivity lead for Kant to considerations of benevolence, of love. Out of our judging with the 'collective reason of mankind', out of our detachment from purely personal considerations there ought to be that active identification with the interests of others that makes those interests our own. 'For the ends of any person, who is an end in himself, must as far as possible also be my end, if that conception of an end in itself is to have its full effect on me.'⁶⁸ This does not mean that love takes priority over the law or that it is commanded by the law, for as Kant notes in the second Critique, love cannot be strictly enjoined as a command.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the objectivity and autonomy of the law place us in the position where love can become a possibility.

This, of course, goes beyond the reading of men as absolute ends to whom respect is owed, for respect merely recognizes on the basis of the objectivity and autonomy of the moral law the legitimacy of the interest of others, and our obligation to not interfere with those interests. It need not lead one to assist others in bringing about their interests. Love, however, Kant argues, considered not in its emotional sense, but as a 'maxim of benevolence'⁷⁰ does precisely that.

The duty of love for one's neighbour can also be expressed as the duty of making others' ends my own (in so far as these ends are only not immoral). The duty of respect for my neighbour is contained in the maxim of not ~~ap~~ using any other man to a mere means to my end....

It [love] refers...to active, practical benevolence (beneficence), which consists in making another's well-being and happiness my end.⁷²

In this sense we find another reason, again generally overlooked, as to why we must conceive of man as a being of absolute value. Love, Kant argues, is a law which like the physical law of attraction, 'admonishes men constantly to come nearer to each other....'⁷³ In this way love, and with it man as end, may be an indispensable pre-requisite of the existence of the moral world.

As Mary Gregor observes

Moral laws governing the relations of men to one another, Kant explains, are the laws of an 'intelligible world' sustained by the forces of love and respect, which can be compared with the forces of attraction and repulsion in the physical world. As the laws of attraction and repulsion are both essential to the existence of nature, so the law of love which bids men draw together, and the law of respect, which commands them to keep a proper distance from one

another, together provide the tension without which the moral world would collapse.⁷⁴

It is tempting, of course, to read too much into this Kantian talk of love. We do not wish to suggest that Kant believes that persons are ends of absolute value because of their capacities for love; the rigour of both reason and of the moral law and their connexion with duty make such a position impossible for him. As he remarks in the second Critique in a long discussion of love, 'It is very beautiful thing to do good to men because of love and a sympathetic good will...but this is not a genuine moral maxim of our conduct...we stand under a discipline of reason.'⁷⁵ But then it might well be objected that Kant's ascription of absolute worth would have been on at least as equally sound conceptual footing if it were based on love, rather than rational freedom. Indeed, one might claim that given Kant's generally stringent notion of what counts as rational and autonomous, love would have provided a far securer means of bringing most of mankind securely within the confines of personhood. Seen in this context of the common human understanding, the conceptions of man as end and man as the being of good will quite naturally go together, in that the condition, necessary and sufficient, for both, is the possession of freedom. Thinking for oneself, thinking from the standpoint of others, and thinking consistently is what Kantian freedom is finally about, for as one does these things he is free from the subjectivity of self-love, free from the cognitive and moral egocentricity which allows one

to make one an exception to the universality of the moral law, free to set ends in independence of nature and free, finally, not simply to consider the interests of others, but to actually adopt them as one's own.

Thus to pull this extended and somewhat diffuse argument together, it appears evident from Kant's discussion of the good will that we clearly cannot expect most persons to be or have such wills, and thus as a criteria of absolute value the good will must necessarily exclude large numbers of individuals from the category of persons, and hence of ends. Inasmuch as Kant wishes to use the conception of absolute ends as a universal one that embraces all rational beings, where rational is read not in his peculiarly narrow sense of acting in accordance with the moral law but rational in the more usual and more general sense, the only possible way that he might do this - at least through the context of an argument about good wills - is to count the potentiality of a good will rather than its actual possession as qualifying one as an absolute end. This means that there must be certain dispositions or characteristics which fulfill the delicate task of either bringing about or at least pointing toward something, in this case good willing, from which they are nonetheless distinct. In Kant's case we suggested that the criteria of potential good will might be found in the notion of common human understanding which Kant appears to believe is both minimal enough to be within the reach of all rational beings, but at

the same time indicative of one's potential for being a good will. The question is thus whether common human understanding - thinking for oneself, thinking from the standpoint of others, and thinking consistently - is in fact minimal enough to bring all persons within the class of the potentially good willed.

Kant appears to believe that this notion of rationality is so minimal that it is 'the least we can expect from any one claiming the name of man....'⁷⁶ But is this really the case? Is this concept of rationality, rationality required it should be recalled for being a good will, really that minimal that we could reasonably expect most men to possess it, albeit in embryonic form? It would appear not, and indeed Kant, on reflection, seems to qualify his optimism about the universal extent of rationality. Thinking for oneself in the sense of non-passive, autonomous thought free from any external determination, thinking objectively in the sense of thinking which takes account of the 'mode of representation of every one else' and thinking consistently which is to say thinking from a universal standpoint are hardly 'common' sorts of rationality that one may legitimately assume every man to possess. In his essay 'What is Enlightenment', Kant notes that 'laziness and cowardice are the reasons why so great a portion of mankind, after nature has long since discharged them from external direction....remains under lifelong tutelage, and why it is so easy for others to set themselves up as their

guardians.'⁷⁷ This apprehension about the general possession of rationality is reiterated in the third Critique discussion of the maxims of common human understanding where Kant suggests that 'enlightenment, while easy, no doubt, in thesi, in hypothesis is difficult and slow of realization.'⁷⁸ Again, in his discussion in the Anthropology about the 'whole sphere of the intellectual cognitive power',⁷⁹ Kant notes that 'reason is the power of deriving the particular from the universal and so representing it according to principles and as necessary. So we can also describe reason as the power of judging...and acting from principles.'⁸⁰ The extent to which we find or indeed should expect to find this reason actually instantiated within man is limited, however. As Kant muses in a particularly Platonic passage

A domestic or civil servant who is under express order needs only understanding. An officer, who is given only the general rule for discharging his duties and left to decide for himself what to do in cases that come up, needs judgement. A general, who has to evaluate all contingencies and think up the rule for them, must have reason. The talents required to fulfill these different functions are very different.⁸¹

Despite the rather restricted class of potentially rational that must result from a strict employment of the Kantian notion of rationality, let us assume for the moment that most men are potentially rational. How probable is it that the potentially rational become the actually rational? Kant might argue that it is highly probable, for at least two reasons. First, given that man's history is the history of his moral development, then man is always in a state of

tension between what he is and what he is yet to become. It is the virtual inevitability of this 'yet to become' which justifies the assumption of highly probable with respect to man's attainment of actual rationality. For instance, in spite of his reservations in the third Critique, Kant's discussion of the maxims of 'common human understanding' in the Anthropology accepts that all men have the capacity to develop the 'wisdom' of the three maxims. The obstacles to such 'minimal' rationality are not conceptual but moral in that men do not want the responsibilities which such rationality entails in that 'they want to be able to blame someone else in case of error; partly, and above all, they are looking for a good way to shirk the essential thing (change of heart)....'⁸² Second, Kant believes that a consequence of a genuine doctrine of self-determination is the unpredictability of any agent's actions. Thus at any given time one cannot make a conclusive judgment about the future course of moral development, about the ultimate possession of a rational will for any particular individual. Even the most conspicuously and persistently bad-willed falls within the scope of the potentially rational if one takes the doctrine of moral progress seriously, as Kant appears to do. Moreover, Kant might wish to go even further. Granted that a sizable number of the potentially rational do not in fact attain actual rationality, it might still be necessary to count all of the potentially rational as absolutely valuable because without such a criteria of

absolute worth it might well be impossible that many would ever attain actual rationality for as merely instrumentally rather than absolutely valuable there would be no prohibition on using them as means which might threaten their very existence. Paradoxically then, it might appear as only the present ascription of absolute value guarantees the conditions under which the future attainment of the good will becomes at all possible. Treating persons as if they were now ends, not potential ends, but realized ends, in the sense of creating the conditions in which they might come to understand and value genuine freedom through acting in opposition to their inclinations and in agreement with the moral law, may be the only way in which they can in fact become such ends. Hence in the very nature of the moral order which seeks to maximize genuine freedom and rationality, it might be incumbent upon those who are good wills, who already act under the law of freedom to treat those persons still confined by 'narrow subjectivity' as absolute ends in the hope that they may in time become so.

But while this might provide a theoretical reason for extending the status of ends to all men simply on the basis of potentiality, it might yet leave us with some doubts at the practical level, doubts which arise, as we shall see in Chapter Four, from Kant's own conception of moral progress. Kant, for instance, notes repeatedly that the triumph of reason, the morally autonomous reason of the good will, is

not at all assured, given the character both of the inclinations and of reason itself.

But if reason of itself does not sufficiently determine the will, and if the will is subjugated to subjective conditions...which do not always agree with objective conditions; in a word, if the will is not of itself in complete accord with reason (the actual case of men), then the actions which are recognized as objectively necessary are subjectively contingent....⁸³ (Emphasis mine)

Moral evil, that 'capacity' for making the 'objectively necessary' into the 'subjectively contingent' through the maxims of self-love, and, what is more, deceiving ourselves that we have done so, may yet render the probability of most potentially good wills actually becoming good wills very slight, and in so doing invalidate the potentiality argument itself.

III

In light of what we have argued it would appear that Kant in the Foundations primarily and the second Critique to some extent, attempts to take those elements that appear in the more historical aspects of his anthropology - man as rational, free and moral - and develop them into a doctrine of what might be termed essential man - man as an absolute end in himself. It is this notion which will function throughout his work in a variety of moral, political and religious contexts. The key to making sense of this claim about man we suggested is understanding what it is that Kant believes gives him this status. One answer, developed within

the Foundations and also to be found in the third Critique's discussion of man as nature's end suggests that it is freedom, man's possibility of acting without being determined by causes outside of himself, 'independence from sensuous impulse in the determination of choice.'⁸⁴

Conceived of in this fashion, man's status of absolute end derives from his capacities of living within the causality ordered universe dominated by the 'mechanical principle of explanation' but nonetheless being the only instance of the appropriate employment of the 'teleological principle of explanation'. Part of the difficulty in making sense of this answer derives, as we saw, from the fact that it contains only one half of Kant's doctrine of freedom, namely only negative freedom, which Kant defines in terms of 'a power to act or to refrain from acting at one's discretion.'

The appetitive power which acts in accordance with concepts, insofar as the ground determining it to action lies in itself and not in the object, is called a power to act or to refrain from acting at one's discretion. It is called choice [Willkür] when it is joined with consciousness that its action can produce the object...⁸⁵

Freedom in this negative sense is decidedly truncated, in that while characterized by reason inasmuch as it is conscious that 'its action can produce the object', and all decisions must be in this sense minimally rational in that they are directed toward producing some end, some object, it is nonetheless still making its choices on the basis of maxims derived from sensuous experience, from Nature, rather than from the pure structure of reason. In this way, Nature

is yet determinative in that even in the act of choosing and in some degree affirming freedom, the person nevertheless chooses in favour of Nature, and thus still comes under Nature's law. As John Silber notes:

The structure or form of the object of volition, that is, the principle that guides the individual in the determination of the content of that object, is called by Kant the maxim of choice. Selection of the maxim and determination of the object of volition in terms of it are aspects of individual self-determination. If in an act of volition the individual merely accepts his strongest desire as the basis for action, he acts on the maxim that he wills to do that which he most strongly desires to do. He thinks of himself passively as if he were determined by laws other than those of his own choosing, he acts as if he were determined by the same laws of nature that determine the behavior of animals. By acting in terms of a law other than his own, his action is heteronomous. But the decision to act heteronomously is nonetheless his own decision. The adoption of the heteronomous maxim is an expression of transcendental freedom, the actualization of one of its potentialities.⁸⁶

Such acting, though free cannot qualify as autonomy: it is merely heteronomous even 'when it conforms to the law.'

If...the material of volition, which cannot be other than an object of a desire which is connected to the law, comes into the practical law as a condition of the possibility, there results heteronomy of choice, or dependence on natural laws in following some impulse or inclination; it is heteronomy because the will does not give itself the law but only directions for a reasonable obedience to pathological laws. The maxim, however, which for this reason can never contain in itself the form of prescribing universal law, not only produces no obligation but is itself opposed to the principle of a pure practical reason and thus also to the moral disposition, even when the action which comes from it conforms to the law.⁸⁷

While strictly negative in character, freedom in this sense is still profoundly revealing of human nature for it discloses persons as agents as opposed to objects, who can

distinguish between their desires and indeed compare their desires and choices to what they ought (the content of which is provided by the moral law) to do.

Despite its initial plausibility, however, we discovered that Kant actually provides no good reasons as to why this negative freedom can provide for man's absolute worth. Indeed, the closest that Kant comes to even raising this question is to suggest that freedom is valuable because it allows us to conceptually distinguish between objects and agents.⁸⁸ We saw, too, that it was open for Kant to invoke some sort of moral intuition theory in which the attribution of absolute value or respect is read as foundational and quite inescapable, though finally inexplicable moral intuition. We noted that Kant's praises of freedom occasionally do come close to this type of justification, but that he seems unprepared to offer it as a serious account.

The second answer which Kant attempted as to why person's possess absolute value is an answer, which like the first, centres on freedom, but, as we noted, this time it is not negative freedom but positive freedom, not simply the 'power to act or refrain from acting at one's discretion', freedom from 'alien determination' but freedom to determine one's actions by maxims derived from the moral law.

Freedom of choice is this independence from sensuous impulse in the determination of choice. This is the negative concept of freedom. The positive concept of freedom is that of the power of pure reason to be of itself practical. But pure reason can be practical

only if the maxim of every action is subjected to the condition that it qualifies as a universal law.⁸⁹

Freedom in its positive sense is thus the possibility, nothing more, of what Kant sees as genuine autonomy - the capacity to bring freedom under law, to subject it to the 'intrinsic legislation of pure and thus practical reason.'⁹⁰ Here freedom is not simply free from 'sensuous impulse' but from the inverted order of maxims that places subjective interests over objective interests. This is what Kant calls the good will, the will which chooses its maxims in accordance with the objectivity of the moral law and thus achieves that autonomy which is alone 'the basis of the dignity of both human nature and every rational nature.'⁹¹ In this the good will makes its maxims 'hold as the universal laws of nature' but with the essential difference that its 'laws' unlike Nature's are freely chosen, not imposed.

Unfortunately, this answer, we saw, will work no better than the previous one inasmuch as it clearly runs into difficulties in attempting to make sense of the whole notion of a potentially rational good will and, on Kant's own admission, offers few convincing empirical arguments to support the probability of the potentially good willed becoming the actually good willed.

What emerges from this are two things. First, underlying both of Kant's formal attempts to make sense of man as an end in himself, and also his less formal conception of persons as beings of absolute value in

consequence of their emancipation, through history, from Nature, is the same essential view of what uniquely constitutes persons, namely their positive freedom read as their rational, moral and autonomous willing. Indeed, one suspects that in the last analysis, and despite Kant's reluctance to admit it, persons are valuable only because they instantiate freedom. Read in one way this is the most obvious sense of man as end, that is man as finally independent end-setter. Second, neither of Kant's two justifications for man as end will work; the doctrine simply cannot do the work which Kant intends it to in his own ethical, and, perhaps more crucially, political theory, and thus the theory ought to be reformulated or abandoned.

Throughout our analysis of Kant's claims we have suggested a variety of ways in which this reformulation might proceed. Kant, might for instance, argue that persons are ends in themselves, absolute ends, whether either actually or potentially, because they provide the foundational character or structure of the world. In this sense the theory of persons becomes a metaphysical claim at the highest level. Such a claim might mean that our complete experience of the world - conceptual and practical - owes its possibility and its coherence to our conceiving persons in this fashion. A modified form of this argument would narrow the range of the claim to moral and political experience by suggesting that not our entire experience of the world but merely our moral and political experiences

would be impossible, that is to say incoherent without conceiving of persons as ends in themselves. Even if not adequately understood or universally followed, persons conceived of as ends is a fundamental and inescapable part of our shared moral experience. Both forms of this claim would thus follow the general argumentative structure of the first Critique which attempted to set out the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience. The concept of persons as ends of absolute value would have to find its place as a 'category' without which the world of experience, at least in some of its dimensions, would be incoherent.

The difficulty with such an argument lies in the fact that many persons apparently do have moral and political experiences which are coherent and yet do not include as their foundational belief the claim that persons are ends in themselves. Indeed, when one escapes the lure of Kant's rhetoric this might strike one as a much more plausible reading of persons. Put in its most abrupt form, Kant's claim about persons reduces to the claim that persons are absolutely valuable not for anything that they are but simply that they are. Seeing persons as ends is to ignore the 'how' of their particular circumstances, most particularly their moral circumstances, and to focus instead on the fact that they are. And this insight has contributed much in terms of presupposition, if not argument, to a variety of political theories. But despite its noble ancestry, it fails to work, at least in its most general

form, in that moral and political experience is indeed possible without it.

The argument can be, of course, reformulated so as to be not so much a foundationally necessary belief for any moral experience as a normative recommendation for governing our moral practices. But here too it appears to fall prey to both conceptual and empirical falsification in that one can make a quite plausible case for contingent value, ascribing value on the basis of some criteria of merit as truer to both our basic moral intuitions and the circumstances of the moral life than allowing all persons absolute value.

Perhaps then if we read the doctrine in the context of freedom, a more tenable form of the claim that is genuinely foundational for moral and political experience might emerge. In this sense persons as ends would mean seeing all persons as agents with intentions that can only be fulfilled if they are free to fulfill them. Interferences with the intentions of agents must always be justified and may upon justification be permissible except for any interference which makes the agent incapable of having and executing any intention. Freedom is possible only in the lives of intentional agents and thus eliminating intentional agents is always wrong because it reduces freedom's possibilities.

While capturing the obvious intuition that existence is a necessary condition for the possession and realization of any intentions, and thus arguing against the elimination of

all intentional beings, formulation of the ends principle nevertheless fails to avoid the meritorian rejoinder that there are at least some intentions, killing the innocent perhaps, which we do not wish to have realized and which we might feel justified in preventing even if this were to render the possessor of those intentions incapable of having any intentions. Free agency is thus not a value that can be divorced from other values nor one which obviously takes precedence over all others in all instances. Quite simply, like persons we value it in part, if not in whole, for what it does, not merely that it is. Thus, while existence is obviously in some sense foundational to the moral and political life, this does not mean that the doctrine of persons as ends can render *prima facie* implausible any consideration of whether the existence of some end might be eliminated.

The other direction that a reformulation of the ends argument might proceed is to place it within some sort of Christian context, traditional or otherwise, where persons are assured of their absolute value on the basis of God's ascription of such value to them, generally signified in terms of his love to them in creation and salvation. Kant, however, within both the Foundations and to a certain extent the second Critique largely resists such a justification of man's status as end. We wish to argue however that Kant's growing perplexity with the problem of radical evil, a problem which exposes the untenability of the anthropology

built on the guidance of Nature, the assured progress of history, and persons as absolutely valuable ends, forces him to re-formulate an anthropology which at least in part, places not merely the ends argument, but man in his conceptual entirety within the confines of Christian theism.

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Chapter Four

MAN AS EVIL: GUILT, GRACE, REDEMPTION AND KANTIAN MAN

Kant, who spent a whole lifetime cleaning his philosophical mantle from all kinds of prejudices which soiled it, has now ignominiously dirtied it again with the shameful spot of radical evil, so that Christians too can feel they ought to kiss the hem of it.

Everyone can convince himself, through his own reason, of the evil which lies in human hearts and from which no one is free; of the impossibility of ever holding himself to be justified before God through his own life conduct, and, at the same time, of the necessity for such a justification valid in His eyes; of the futility of substituting churchly observances and pious compulsory services for the righteousness which is lacking, and, over and against this, of the inescapable₂ obligation to become a new man....²

Despite the fact that man is an absolute end in himself possessing at least the potential for objective, non self-interest actions, and, indeed, for love, for adopting the interests of others as his own, man, also, according to Kant, quite often fails to treat either himself or other rational agents as absolute ends. While signaling man's potential for perfection, man's actions also frequently testify to the reality of what Kant gradually comes to

recognize as radical evil. The destiny of persons may well be freedom from the bondage of nature, but their reality, however, appears to be their self-chosen enslavement to their natural inclinations. If Kant is thus to sustain his doctrine of persons as absolute end, which while his foundational anthropological claim is nonetheless seriously suspect, and to provide as well some degree of assurance in the face of the impressive evidence to the contrary that moral perfection is at least in principle possible, he must provide an answer to the problem of radical evil.

The problem of evil was not some merely late career obsession for Kant. Despite his early flirtation with Leibnitzian optimism, Kant, through his critical period at least, was never an exponent of what may be termed facile Enlightenment optimism: that optimism, which founded on science and reason, saw mankind's progress toward perfectibility as forever assured. As he notes at the beginning of Religion

All agree that the world began in a good estate, whether in a Golden Age, a life in Eden, or a yet more happy community with celestial beings. But they represent that this happiness vanished like a dream and that a Fall into evil...presently hurried mankind from bad to worse with accelerated descent.... More modern, though less prevalent, is the contrasted optimist belief...that the world steadily...forges in the other direction, to wit, from bad to better....If this belief, however, is meant to apply to moral goodness and badness...it has certainly not been deduced from experience; the history of all times cries too loudly against it.

Whether from his early experiences as part of a Christian community rooted in the belief in comprehensive evil not

simply as theological dictum but self-evident moral fact, or whether from his systematic explorations of the moral law within, or indeed, from a careful consideration of the historical record or the implications of the doctrine of human responsibility and freedom, Kant was never able to frame a conception of man that omitted evil as at least partly constitutive of his nature. In one sense it is nonetheless odd for Kant to speak not merely of evil but of radical evil, not merely because he later wishes to argue for man's redemption, but more importantly because he seems largely unconcerned to actually demonstrate the existence of such evil beyond a few remarks in Book One of Religion.

That such a corrupt propensity must indeed be rooted in man need not be formally proved in view of the multitude of crying examples which experience of the actions of men puts before our eyes. If we wish to draw our examples from state in which various philosophers hoped preeminently to discover the natural goodness of human nature, namely, from the so-called state of nature, we need but compare with this hypothesis the scenes of unprovoked cruelty in the murder-dramas enacted in Tofoa, New Zealand, and in the Navigator Islands, and the unending cruelty...in the wide wastes of northwestern American, cruelty from which, indeed, not a soul reaps the smallest benefit.... If, however, we incline to the opinion that human nature can better be known in the civilized state...we must listen to a long melancholy litany of indictments against humanity: of secret falsity even in the closest friendship,...of a propensity to hate him to whom one is indebted,...of a hearty well-wishing which yet allows of the remark that "in the misfortunes of our best friends there is something which is not altogether displeasing to us", and of many other vices still concealed under the appearance of virtue....But if we are not yet content we need but contemplate a state which is compounded in strange fashion of both the others, that is, the international situation, where civilized nations stand towards each other in the relation obtaining in the barbarous state of nature...a state...from which they have taken fixedly into their heads never to depart.

While progress of sorts might be reasonably assured, perfectibility was not at all assured. Indeed, perfectibility is final status within Kant's epistemological framework seems to be that of postulate of moral faith, falling midway, as it were, between assumption and hope. And it precisely this ambiguous nature which is to be found at the centre of Kantian man which has the most decisive influence in shaping Kant's moral, theological, and, in the end, political views. The political consequences of this evil character of persons are, for instance, readily apparent in Kant's quite different estimate of war which is found in Religion. Gone is the notion of 'splendid misery' of Nature which uses war for forcing men into cosmopolitan government. Rather, here war and revolution are seen alternating in a cycle which is finally productive of nothing but a misery which is neither splendid nor creative of anything.

Each separate state, so long as it has a neighboring state which it dares hope to conquer, strives to aggrandize itself through such a conquest and thus to attain world-monarchy, a polity wherein all freedom...would expire. Yet this monster...after it has swallowed all its neighbors, finally dissolves of itself, and through rebellion and disunion breaks up into many smaller states. These instead of striving toward a league of nations...begin the same game over again....[W]ar creates more evil men than it destroys.⁵

Politics then is simply another confirmation of man's corruption in that its principles 'flatly contradict...morality....Nor...has any philosopher been able to propose better principles which at the same time can be brought into harmony with human nature. The result is that

the philosophical millennium, which hopes for perpetual peace...is universally ridiculed as a wild fantasy.'⁶ Moral skepticism thus appears to render Kant's political hopes untenable, even as hopes.

We are thus left with at least two central questions with respect to Kant's doctrine of radical evil and its relationship to his anthropological conceptions. First, what precisely is radical evil and how has it come to be such an influential, indeed, dominating component of the nature of persons? Second, what are the prospects, if any, of moral revolution, of diminishing if not removing radical evil as a threat to the moral enterprise of persons, indeed, to their status as absolutely valuable ends?

While the concept of radical evil is generally associated with Religion the problem of evil in relation to human nature actually appears somewhat earlier in both the Lectures on Philosophical Theology and the Conjectural Beginning. The account in the Lectures in one sense parallels certain of the themes to be found in the Conjectural Beginning in that evil's origin is rooted in man's inexperience with reason and morality, with his Rohheit, with his incomplete control of the inclinations. In one sense the inclinations are cast as inevitably opposed to reason and freedom, and hence susceptible to mis-use, though Kant also wishes to argue in a fashion quite foreign to his other accounts of evil, that man was initially

created perfect, though the sense of his perfection - in 'nature and predispositions' is unclear.

First, we must note that of all the many creatures there are, man is the only one who has to work for his perfection and for the goodness of his character, producing them from within himself. God therefore gave him talents and capabilities, but left it up to man himself how he would employ them. He created man free, but gave him also animal instincts; he gave man senses to be moderated and overcome through the development of his understanding. Thus created, man was certainly perfect both in his nature and as regards his predispositions. But regarding the development of these predispositions, he was still crude and uncultivated. Man himself had to be responsible for this development, through the cultivation of his talents and the goodness of his will....Much can be expected of him, but on the other hand, no less is to be feared. He can perhaps raise himself above a whole host of will-less angels, but he may also degrade himself so that he sinks even beneath the irrational animals. To begin his cultivation he must step forth out of his uncultivated state, and free himself from his instincts. But what then will be his lot? Only false steps and foolishness. Yet who but man himself is responsible for them?

It is these strong instincts which despite man's 'perfection' nevertheless 'beguile' him into evil.

But since at the same time man has many instincts belonging to animality, and since he has to have them if he is to continue being human, the strength of his instincts will beguile him, and he will abandon himself to them. It is from this that evil arises; or rather, he falls into foolishness as soon as he begins to use his reason. A special seed for evil is unthinkable. It is rather the first development of our reason towards goodness which is the origin of evil. Or again, it is the uncultivatedness still remaining in the progress of man's cultivation which is evil. Evil, therefore, is inevitable.⁸

Kant seems to some extent unsure about not merely what evil is, but how it originates as well in this account, in that he characterizes it at one point as nothing more than foolishness. On one reading evil appears to be inevitable

inasmuch as man cannot eliminate his instincts, a theme that reappears in Religion. But what is quite different from the mature account of evil to be found in Religion is the insistence that there is no special seed for evil. As we shall see, in Religion, Kant clearly abandons this position in favour of an 'original propensity' within persons to invert the proper order of incentives in the moral life.

The same theme of reason's corruption of initially good or at least morally neutral instincts is found in the Conjectural Beginning.

So long as inexperienced man obeyed this call of nature all was well with him. But soon reason began to stir. A sense different from that to which instinct was tied - the sense, say, of sight - presented other food than that normally consumed as similar to it; and reason, instituting a comparison, sought to enlarge its knowledge of foodstuffs beyond the bounds of instinctual knowledge. This experiment might, with good luck, have ended well, even though instinct did not advise it, so long as it was at least not contrary to instinct. But reason has this peculiarity that, aided by the imagination, it can create artificial desires which are not only unsupported by natural instinct but actually contrary to it.

Whereas 'in the beginning' man was 'guided by instinct alone, that voice of God which is obeyed by all animals',¹⁰ man's destiny is to be shaped by reason, which at least in its initial appearance, plays the role of both liberator and corrupter. Kant is curiously silent about the source of reason, saying only that it simply began to stir. It is, however, difficult to escape the conclusion that man's rational capacity must at least be latent in his natural constitution, lest it would appear ex nihilo. And, of course, Kant suggests, at least implicitly, that man's

animal nature, indeed, all of man while not yet knowing 'either the secret propensities or the remote effects of anything,'¹¹ knows at least that he has 'a power of choosing for himself a way of life, of not being bound without alternative to a single way, like the animals.'¹² In effect, it is man's reason, Kant argues, that brings man to self-consciousness, to the ability to distinguish himself from the natural world, to the realization that he is man.

Coincidental with that first knowledge of his unique powers is, however, the knowledge that those powers can be misused.

Before reason awoke, there was as yet neither commandment nor prohibition and hence also no violation of either. But when reason began to set about its business, it came, in all its pristine weakness into conflict with animality, with all its power. Inevitably evils sprang up, and (which is worse) - along with the cultivation of reason also vices, such as had been¹³ wholly alien to the state of ignorance and innocence.

There is, Kant appears to suggest, a certain inevitability in the corruption of instinct by reason in that reason by its very 'pristine' character is inexperienced and thus weak, while animality, or nature as instinctive is extraordinarily vigorous. Evil is thus a product of the conjunction of weak, non-foresightful, and undisciplined reason and vigorous inclination. The source of evil is not simply man's inclinations, man's sensuous character, for these provide but one component in the creation of immorality. Rather, it is man's freely chosen perversion of the instincts which Kant argues is the root of vice. Man's

instinctual nature may well provide the occasion for evil, but it is not, for Kant, the ground or source of evil. Indeed, it might even provide the occasion for virtue. This bears some emphasis in that Kant's moral theory is often caricatured (not entirely unfairly in that he often speaks in ways that at least appear to make this interpretation plausible), as presenting man as a radically dichotomized being who is continually torn between his natural and sensuous inclinations and his higher, rational and moral inclinations. Now Kant does often speak of the sensuous inclinations as unfortunate, unfortunate in that they tend to make him a part of the natural world through thwarting the development of his positive freedom. However, in Religion this position is substantially if not entirely modified in that Kant notes that the sensuous inclinations are inextirpable and the task of the moral being is thus to bring them under the discipline of reason. Indeed, it is the Stoics, Kant argues, who have mistaken the real character of evil, imputing it to the 'merely undisciplined natural inclinations which present themselves so openly to everyone's consciousness....',¹⁴

Natural inclinations, considered in themselves, are good, that is, not a matter of reproach, and it is not only futile to want to extirpate them but to do so would also be harmful and blameworthy. Rather, let them be tamed and instead of clashing with one another they can be brought into harmony in a wholeness which is called happiness.¹⁵

Now the ground of this evil (1) cannot be placed, as is so commonly done, in man's sensuous nature and the natural inclinations arising therefrom. For not only are these not directly related to evil (rather do

they afford the occasion for what the moral disposition in its power can manifest, namely virtue); we must not even be considered responsible for their existence (we cannot be, for since they are implanted in us we are not their authors). We are accountable, however, for the propensity to evil, which, as it affects the morality of the subject, is to be found in him as a free-acting being and for which it must be possible to hold him accountable as the offender--this, too despite the fact that this propensity is so deeply rooted in the will that we are forced to say that it is to be found in man by nature. Neither can the ground of this evil (2) be placed in a corruption of the morally legislative reason--as if reason could destroy the authority of the very law which is its own, or deny the obligation arising therefrom; this is absolutely impossible. To conceive of oneself as a freely acting being and yet as exempt from the law which is appropriate to such a being (the moral law) would be tantamount to conceiving a cause operating without any laws whatsoever (for determination according to natural laws is excluded by the fact of freedom); this is a self-contradiction. In seeking, therefore, a ground of the morally-evil in man, [we find that] sensuous nature comprises too little, for when the incentives which can spring from freedom are taken away, man is reduced to a merely animal being. On the other hand, a reason exempt from the moral law, a malignant reason as it were (a thoroughly evil will), comprises too much, for thereby opposition to the law would itself be set up as an incentive (since in the absence of all incentives the will cannot be determined), and thus the subject would be made a devilish being. Neither of these designations is applicable to man.¹⁶

Kant's terminology here is often unclear if not inconsistent in that he speaks variously of 'sensuous nature' and 'natural inclinations' without ever defining his terms. Apparently sensuous nature should be read as the predisposition to animality from which the inclinations for self-preservation, propagation, and community arise. Sensuous nature is sensuous in that it is man as a purely natural being, man without either reason or morality. This distinction, however, which Kant uses quite often, is yet a curious one in that he also suggests that man's rational and

moral inclinations are as genuinely natural as his sensuous inclinations. What Kant is really suggesting is an apparently two-fold understanding of natural as applied to persons: natural in the first sense is that which owes its origin to Nature, to the non-human world, within which would fall the predispositions to animality, and natural in a second sense is that which while not originating in Nature nevertheless is an inherent or defining characteristic of persons, for example their predisposition to humanity and personality. Natural inclinations then, are decidedly not the source of radical evil. It should also be recalled that Kant in connexion with his historical accounts of the development of persons, also makes another double use of Nature and natural to refer both to the scientifically explicable natural world and the complete realization of a person or object's telos.

On the other hand, neither is radical evil to be discovered in a corruption of Wille, the morally legislative reason in that such a 'malignant' reason is theoretically impossible since it would entail acting freely and yet being exempt from the moral law-something which Kant conceives to be akin to irrational rationality. Kant suggests that a corruption of Wille would in fact be equivalent to 'conceiving a cause operating without any laws whatsoever,'¹⁷ which he sees as a contradiction. Wille cannot thus be the source of radical evil because such evil entails both choice and a choice to act against the nature of rational freedom

itself, and Wille does not make any choices and moreover could not act against rational freedom since it is the law of freedom. The act of moral rebellion, of disobedience to the law simply for the sake of disobedience, like the deliberate choice of evil simply for the sake of evil - what Kant calls a 'devilish' will - are all for Kant inconceivable. 'Man (even the most wicked) does not, under any maxim whatsoever, repudiate the moral law in the manner of a rebel (renouncing obedience to it). The law, rather, forces itself upon him irresistibly by virtue of his moral predisposition....'¹⁸

If then radical evil is not to be found in either the sensuous inclinations nor in a corrupt Wille, where should we look to discover its source? An initially promising answer is to be found in Kant's discussion of what he calls the 'Original Predisposition to good in human nature', which is an account, surprisingly brief by Kantian standards, of 'original' human nature.

We may conveniently divide this predisposition...into three divisions, to be considered as elements in the fixed character and destiny [Bestimmung] of man:

- (1) The predisposition to animality in man, taken as a living being;
- (2) The predisposition to humanity in man, taken as a living and at the same time a rational being;
- (3) The predisposition to personality in man, taken as a rational and at the same time an accountable being.

1. The predisposition to animality in mankind may be brought under the general title of physical and purely mechanical self-love, wherein no reason is demanded. It is threefold: first, for self-preservation; second, for the propagation of the species, through the sexual impulse, and for the care of offspring so begotten; and third, for community with other men, i.e., the social impulse. On these three stems can be grafted all kinds

of vices (which, however, do not spring from this predisposition itself as a root). They may be termed vices of the coarseness of nature, and in their greatest deviation from natural purposes are called the beastly vices of gluttony and drunkenness, lasciviousness, and wild lawlessness (in relation to other men).

2. The predisposition to humanity can be brought under the general title of a self-love which is physical and yet compares (for which reason is required); that is to say, we judge ourselves happy or unhappy only by making comparison with others. Out of this self-love springs the inclination to acquire worth in the opinion of others. This is originally a desire merely for equality, to allow no one superiority above oneself, bound up with a constant care lest others strive to attain such superiority; but from this arises gradually the unjustifiable craving to win it for oneself over others. Upon this twin stem of jealousy and rivalry may be grafted the very great vices of secret and open animosity against all whom we look upon as not belonging to us--vices, however, which really do not sprout of themselves from nature as their root; rather are they inclinations, aroused in us by the anxious endeavors of others to attain a hated superiority over us, to attain for ourselves as a measure of precaution and for the sake of safety such a position over others. For nature, indeed, wanted to use the idea of such rivalry (which in itself does not exclude mutual love) only as a spur to culture. Hence the vices which are grafted upon this inclination might be their termed vices of culture; in highest degree of malignancy, as, for example, in envy, ingratitude, spitefulness, etc. (where they are simply the idea of a maximum of evil going, beyond what is human), they can be called the diabolical vices.

3. The predisposition to personality is the capacity for respect for the moral law as in itself a sufficient incentive of the will. This capacity for simply respect for the moral law within us would thus be moral feeling which in and through itself does not constitute an end of the natural predisposition except so far as it is the motivating force of the will. Since this is possible only when the free will incorporates such moral feeling into its maxim, the property of such a will is good character. The latter, like every character of the free will, is something which can only be acquired; its possibility, however, demands the presence in our nature of a predisposition on which it is absolutely impossible to graft anything evil. We cannot rightly call the idea of the moral law,...a

predisposition to personality; it is personality itself....¹⁹

Inasmuch as these are all 'predispositions to the good', evil cannot be found as an intrinsic feature of any of them, but rather only, as Kant notes, as they are used 'contrary to their ends.' Thus with respect to the predisposition to animality, its three 'stems', which demand no reason, provide the basis, though not the 'root' for 'all kinds of vices', namely gluttony, drunkenness, lasciviousness, and wild lawlessness. Similarly, the predisposition to humanity, which is distinguished from the mechanical and nonrational self love of animality by its connexion with practical reason, begins life as nothing more than a completely justified desire for equality, but soon degenerates into jealousy and rivalry from which derive the vices of 'culture'. The predisposition to personality is incorruptible, however, inasmuch it is the reason of the moral law itself which 'dictates laws unconditionally.'²⁰ Nevertheless, all of these predispositions must be read as originally good, in, as Kant notes, both the negative sense that 'they do not contradict the moral law',²¹ and in the positive sense that they actually 'enjoin the observance of the law.'²²

All of these predispositions are not only good in negative fashion (in that they do not contradict the moral law); they are also predispositions toward good (they enjoin the observance of the law). They are original, for they are bound up with the possibility of human nature. Man can indeed use the first two contrary to their ends, but he can extirpate none of them.²³

None of these predispositions can thus provide the basis for radical evil, not simply because they do not provide the essential characteristic of such evil, contradiction of the moral law itself, but because they actually, though in a sometimes convoluted fashion, contribute to the law's observance and because they are original, and persons cannot be held accountable for them without destroying the entire foundation of moral responsibility itself. Radical evil is not then to be found in the sensuous inclinations, nor in the corruption of such inclinations, nor in the morally legislative reason, Wille. Rather, it is centred in what Kant describes as a propensity, 'the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination',²⁴ 'of the will to maxims which neglect the incentives springing from the moral law in favour of others which are not moral'.²⁵ Kant is anxious to distinguish between propensity and predisposition because he believes that propensities are acquired characteristics for which persons can be held accountable.

A propensity is distinguished from a predisposition by the fact that although it can indeed be innate, it ought not to be represented merely thus; for it can also be regarded as having been acquired...or brought by man upon himself.²⁶

This propensity is a natural one, Kant argues, because it is part of the 'character of the race'.²⁷

But having identified radical evil in terms of a propensity to neglect the incentives which derive from the moral law, Kant yet wishes to distinguish it from what he

terms the frailty and impurity of human character. The frailty of persons is not really radical evil in that it is merely the weakness of individuals in observing their chosen maxims. In a somewhat similar way, impurity derives from the failure to adopt the moral law as one's sole incentive in action. On the other hand, the corruption or 'perversity of the human heart', what Kant calls radical evil, is not the failure consistently to follow one's incentives nor the adoption of mixed incentives, but the reversal of the 'ethical order among the incentives of a free will; and although conduct which is lawfully good (i.e., legal) may be found with it, yet the cast of mind is thereby corrupted at its root (so far as the moral disposition is concerned), and the man is hence designated as evil.'²⁸ Such a propensity cannot be considered as a physical propensity 'pertaining to the will of man as a natural being' for physical propensities, which are grounded as we have seen in physical sensuous inclinations, cannot derive from freedom, and are thus not morally imputable. Rather, the propensity to radical evil must be, Kant insists, a moral one in that it pertains to man's will as a 'moral being.'²⁹ Part of Kant's reason for describing this sort of evil as radical is to be found then in its foundational character: it is a corruption of the 'subjective determining ground of the will,'³⁰ that is to say in the source of all actions, not merely the corruption of certain individual evil acts. Indeed, an agent's particular acts may in fact escape the

imputation of evil without in any respect diminishing the character of radical evil itself. As Kant notes, we are speaking here of two quite different actions, the 'intelligible action', which is morally imputable, of reversing the ethical order of the incentives, which is something which precedes all specific temporal acts and is understandable through 'pure reason alone', and the sensible, empirical actions which follow from this reversal.

The propensity to evil...is an act in the first sense...and at the same time the formal ground of all unlawful conduct in the second sense, which latter, considered materially, violates the law and is termed vice...and the first offense remains, even though the second...may be repeatedly avoided. The former is intelligible action, cognizable by means of pure reason alone, apart from every temporal condition; the latter is sensible action, empirical, given in time.³¹

Thus to speak about man as evil in this radical sense is to predicate of him a moral as opposed to a physical propensity to evil, a propensity which is imputable to no one but himself.

Man is evil, can mean only, He is conscious of the moral law but has nevertheless adopted into his maxim the...deviation therefrom. He is evil by nature, means but this, that evil can be predicated of man as a species; not that such a quality can be inferred from the concept of his species (that is, of man in general) - for then it would be necessary; but rather that from what we know of man through experience we cannot judge otherwise of him, or, that we may presuppose evil to be subjectively necessary to every man, even to the best.³²

All of this, however, is still not an explanation as to how radical evil, this neglect of the moral law, comes about and what precisely it entails. Kant insists, of course, that despite the experiential evidence in favour of radical

evil, 'such proofs do not teach us the essential character of that propensity or the ground of this opposition.'³³ This is true because the root of radical evil is to be found in an intelligible act which by definition is beyond the scope of all possible experience. 'Experience, however, never can reveal the root of evil in the supreme maxim of the free will relating to the law, a maxim which, as intelligible act, precedes all experience.'³⁴ Our understanding of radical evil- both in terms of its origin and its nature must be found 'a priori through the concept of evil, so far as evil is possible under the laws of freedom.'³⁵ Free actions thus cannot be explained in terms of temporal origins as this would be to bring them under the causality of the natural world, something that would contradict their free character.

To seek the temporal origin of free acts as such (as though they were natural effects) is thus a contradiction. Hence it is also a contradiction to seek the temporal origin of man's moral character, so far as it is considered as contingent, since this character signifies the ground of the exercise of freedom; this ground (like the determining ground of the free will generally) must be sought in purely rational representations.³⁶

What sort of 'rational representation' is thus descriptive of radical evil? It should be recalled that because of the overtly religious dimension of evil and indeed because of the general context of Religion itself, Kant provides not merely a 'rational representation' of evil's origin and nature, but also a historical one, one which can be reconciled with the Scriptural account. In

this sense we have yet another account of human origins which, like that offered in the Conjectural Beginning, is offered as a supplement to the Biblical narrative. In the a priori, the rational account, radical evil is described as originating not in terms of the incentives adopted by the person as the basis of his maxim, that is the incentives of sensuous nature as opposed to the incentives of the moral law, but rather the order of relation between the incentives of nature and the incentives of the moral law. It is not the content, but the form of the maxim.

Man (even the most wicked) does not, under any maxim whatsoever, repudiate the moral law in the manner of a rebel (renouncing obedience to it). The law, rather, forces itself upon him irresistibly by virtue of his moral predisposition; and were no other incentive working in opposition, he would adopt the law into his supreme maxim as the sufficient determining ground of his will; that is, he would be morally good. But by virtue of an equally innocent natural predisposition he depends upon the incentives of his sensuous nature and adopts them also (in accordance with the subjective principle of self-love) into his maxim. If he took the latter into his maxim as in themselves wholly adequate to the determination of the will, without troubling himself about the moral law (which, after all, he does have in him), he would be morally evil. Now, since he naturally adopts both into his maxim, and since, further, he would find either, if it were alone, adequate in itself for the determining of the will, it follows that if the difference between the maxims amounted merely to the difference between the two incentives (the content of the maxims), that is, if it were merely a question as to whether the law or the sensuous impulse were to furnish the incentive, man would be at once good and evil: this, however, (as we saw in the Introduction) is a contradiction. Hence the distinction between a good man and one who is evil cannot lie in the difference between the incentives which they adopt into their maxim (not in the content of the maxim), but rather must depend upon subordination (the form of the maxim), i.e., which of the two incentives he makes the condition of the other. Consequently, man (even the best) is evil only in that he reverses the moral order of the incentives when he

adopts them into his maxim. He adopts, indeed, the moral law along with the law of self-love; yet when he becomes aware that they cannot remain on a par with each other but that one must be subordinated to the other as its supreme condition, he makes the incentive of self-love and its inclinations the condition of obedience to the moral law; whereas ...the latter, as the supreme condition of the satisfaction of the former, ought to have been adopted into the universal maxim of the will as the sole incentive.³⁷

Radical evil is hence radical in at least the first sense in that what Kant calls the law of self-love is made determinative of one's maxims in place of the moral law. It is in this sense that radical evil is not to be found in particular evil actions so much as a morally deficient will. As Allan Wood correctly notes:

A particular evil act, in Kant's view, is possible only through the adoption of an evil maxim. Thus the propensity to evil in man does not refer to the inversion of the moral incentives of particular acts; it refers to the human propensity to adopt maxims which invert these incentives. The propensity to evil is thus a propensity to follow an evil principle, to adopt a maxim or₃₈ policy of evil doing, and hence to have an evil will.

Man's entire distinctiveness, according to Kant, is to be found in his capacities for rational freedom, for setting and acting on ends that transcend the natural, causally-determined order of the phenomenal world. But to allow the incentives of sensuous nature to have priority over those of the moral law is to lose precisely what is man's most important characteristic. It is to become virtually incapable of genuinely free and thus moral actions; it is reason's corruption of man's essential personhood.

But it is not simply man's ability to set ends in distinction from the natural world - negative freedom - that

constitutes for Kant his uniqueness, it is also as we have previously argued, positive freedom, man's ability to set ends in accordance with the universal and objective character of the moral law. And it is this capacity for objective action which radical evil also renders tenuous through its connexion with self-love. Radical evil, for Kant is not the adoption of the 'law of self-love', for as he notes in his discussion of the predispositions to animality and humanity, self-love is a 'natural' component of human personhood. Rather, it is the subordination of the moral law - the only guarantor of genuine freedom and with it genuine selfhood - to the law of self-love so that the moral law becomes the maxim for actions only when it coincides with self-interest, that is constitutive of radical evil. Self-love rather than the moral law as determinative of one's maxims thus makes the entire moral enterprise impossible for it is only through the objectivity of the moral law that genuine freedom is to be found. Radical evil is thus not some merely interesting late-life obsession for Kant, the answer to which is unimportant in terms of his moral and political theory, for his central conceptual problem, and not his alone, but political theory's in general, of how to reconcile autonomy and lawfulness hangs on his answer to this problem. Objectivity, the objectivity of the moral law with its formal conditions of universalizability, provides for Kant the only mechanism by which freedom can be finally saved.

Without man's voluntary submission to the laws of freedom, his propensity to treat his own interests as either exceptions to the moral order or as constitutive of the entire moral universe cannot be contained. Radical evil then as self-love quite literally destroys man's capabilities for understanding the character of the moral law in providing the formal conditions upon which any moral and political order must be based.

In this sense, too, the argument connects with the basic Kantian conception of man as an absolute end in that man's possession of the status of absolutely valuable end is based on his capacity to adopt the universality and objectivity of the moral law. The essence of a moral agent for Kant is acting freely in terms of the moral law, that is to say acting freely without the constraints of the subjectivism of self-love, and the narrowness of moral egocentricity. Radical evil thus destroys one's capacity for according priority to the moral law and in doing so it destroys as well one's standing as end.

Thus far we have argued that radical character of evil is to be found in its destruction of freedom, man's most important characteristic and task, and with it his status as absolute end, through allowing the law of self-love rather than the moral law to order his ends. This, however, leads to the question as to how such a radical threat to personality itself can proceed unchecked. And it is in the answer to this question that we discern another aspect of

evil's radical quality. The reversal of the proper order of incentives is something that is so fundamentally subversive of what Kant calls personality that were it not for a particular feature of human nature, conscience would not allow it to proceed. Only because of man's capacities for self-deception does conscience acquiesce in the subordination of the moral law to self-love.

This innate guilt...which is so denominated because it may be discerned in man as early as the first manifestations of the exercise of freedom,...this guilt may be judged in its first two stages (those of frailty and impurity) to be unintentional guilt...but in the third to be deliberate guilt...and to display in its character a certain insidiousness in regard to its own good and evil dispositions, and, if only its conduct has not evil consequences...does not trouble itself about its disposition but rather considers³⁹ itself justified before the law. (emphasis mine)

In this sense then radical evil is more than the reversal of the incentives, it is also one's persistent refusal to acknowledge that one has in fact done so. Kant finds the Christian notion of the Devil as the father of deceit and of the first sin centreing on deception, a further confirmation of the intrinsic connexion between evil and deception.

All homage paid to the moral law is an act of hypocrisy, if, in one's maxim, ascendancy is not at the same time granted to the law as an incentive sufficient in itself and higher than all other determining grounds of the will. The propensity to do this is not in inward deceit, i.e., a tendency to deceive oneself in the interpretation of the moral law, to its detriment (Genesis III, 5). Accordingly, the Bible...denominates the author of evil (who is within us) as the liar from the beginning, and thus characterizes man with respect to what seems to be the chief ground of evil in him.⁴⁰

A similar connexion of deceit and evil with the Biblical context is made by Kant in the Metaphysic of Morals

following a discussion of how self-deceit is logically possible.

It is noteworthy that the Bible dates the first crime by which evil entered the world, not from fratricide (Cain's) but from the first lie...and calls the author of all evil a liar from the beginning and the father of lies. Reason can assign no further ground for man's propensity to hypocrisy...although this propensity must have been present first; for an act of freedom cannot...be derived and explained according to the natural law⁴¹ of the connexion of effects with their causes...

To a certain extent this self-deception originates in man's imperfect rationality, a rationality which in this instance is used against human ends in that it mistakenly believes that it can simultaneously adopt two quite incompatible foundational maxims. Self-deception has at least one root then in reason's powers to disguise the inherent contradictions between the moral law and the law of self-love. This deception is rendered even more probable by the fact that judged strictly in terms of consequences, an agent's actions might not appear to diverge from the requirements of formal morality.

Yet, even this reversal of the ethical order of the incentives in and through his maxim, a man's actions still may prove to be as much in conformity to the law as if they sprang from true basic principles. This happens when reason employs the unity of the maxims in general, a unity which is inherent in the moral law, merely to bestow upon the incentives of inclination, under the name of happiness, a unity of maxims which otherwise they cannot have. (For example, truthfulness, if adopted as a basic principle, delivers us from the anxiety of making our lies agree with one another and of not being entangled by their serpent coils.) The empirical character is then good, but the intelligible character is still evil.⁴²

We adopt the imperative of truth-telling then not because we believe that truthfulness is necessarily right in the sense of following from the logic of the moral law, but because for the sake of happiness - which Kant, of course, considers a sensuous inclination, we wish to be relieved of the anxiety consequent to telling lies. Thus even while our actions are indistinguishable from conformity to the moral law, our motive is not conformity to it but rather conformity to our reading of self-interest. Conscience for Kant thus does not function as the source of objective judgements about the correctness or incorrectness of an agent's action, but rather as a judge of the agent's moral intentions, that is whether the agent has actually attempted to discern his duties in terms of self-love or the objectivity of the moral law. In this sense, the insidiousness of radical evil is to be found precisely in its use of reason as a corrupter of personhood. The enemy is 'an invisible foe who screens himself behind reason and is therefore all the more dangerous.' Self-deceit, self-love and perverted reason are thus for Kant always conjoined, which suggests that perhaps the first imperative of Kantian ethics is not act freely, which is to say act objectively, but rather 'Know thyself', do not be deceived, for such self-knowledge is the indispensable pre-requisite for genuine morality. In this sense, Kant's condemnation of lying, which is often seen as simply ethical rhetoric or unnecessary rigourism is quite justified for self-deception

is destructive of the very possibility of genuine selfhood.

As he notes in the Metaphysic of Morals

The greatest violation of man's duty to himself merely as a moral being (to humanity in his own person) is the contrary of truthfulness, the lie.... The lie can be an outer lie... or also an inner lie. Be a lie a man makes himself contemptible - by an outer lie, in the eyes of others; by an inner lie, in his own eyes, which is still worse - and violates the dignity of humanity in his own person.... By a lie a man throws away and, as it were, annihilates his dignity as a man.⁴³

This same theme is found in Kant's generally neglected essay, 'On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies', in which he devotes substantial attention to the 'vice of insincerity which seems so profoundly rooted in human hearts.'⁴⁴ He refers there to those characteristics which make men evil, enmity and the inclination to lie.

The second inclination is to the use of a means, the lie, which is good for nothing, whatever may be the intention behind it, because this means is in itself evil and objectionable. The evil of the second kind of man is worthlessness, an evil which completely ruins the character of the man. I insist here especially on this duplicity which lies hidden in the depths of the heart, because man manages to falsify his innermost sentiments before his own conscience. It is one more reason for not being too surprised at his inclination for exterior lies. If this inner duplicity were not universal, one would have to admit that men go on keeping false currency in circulation, in spite of that fact that each one fully knows that the currency with which he trades is false.⁴⁵

Despite Kant's claims about the undoubted existence of such self-deception, he is also alive to the inherent paradoxicality of speaking about self-deception as something that grows out of man's natural and indeed, providentially implanted impulse to concealment and reserve with respect to his shortcomings.

Man is reserved in order to conceal faults and shortcomings which he has; he pretends in order to make others attribute to him merits and virtues which he has not. Our proclivity to reserve and concealment is due to the will of Providence that the defects of which we are full should not be too obvious.... Therefore we arrange our conduct either⁴⁶ to conceal our faults or to appear other than we are.

Kant acknowledges, of course, that such simulation may also ultimately effect in one, not deception but good, in that one may come to be genuinely like the character one effects.

The more elaborate explanation for the mechanism of self-deception, though one that is in the end fundamentally unhelpful, is not to be found in terms of natural impulses to reserve and simulation but rather in the relationships between noumenal man and phenomenal man. Self-deceit here is the deceit of man as moral being by man as natural being, of homo noumenon by homo phaenomenon.

It is easy to show that man is, in fact, guilty of many inner lies, but to explain the possibility of an inner lie seems more difficult. For a lie requires a second person whom one intends to deceive, and intentionally to deceive oneself seems to contain a contradiction. Man as a moral being (homo noumenon) cannot use his natural being (homo phaenomenon) as a mere means...as if it were not bound to its intrinsic end (the communication of thought): he is bound to use his natural being in a way that is consistent with the pronouncement...of his moral being and obligated to himself to truthfulness. If, for example a man who really does not believe in a future judge of the world professes a lying belief in such a judge, persuading himself that it could do no harm and might indeed be useful to profess such a belief in the presence of a scrutinizer of hearts, in order hypocritically to win His favour if He should happen to⁴⁷ exist, [this man is guilty of an inner lie....]

Natural man thus conceals or at least attempts to conceal from moral man the genuine state of his will with respect to the moral law, which means that the logic of self-deception

is inescapably the logic of phenomenal-noumenal relations, and such relations are by definition beyond the reach of human understanding. We may observe the results of self-deceit in the lives of persons, especially ourselves, but as to the mechanism by which it is affected, or indeed the reason for its occurring at all, we must remain ignorant.

Beyond the dimensions of self-deception and the abnegation of personality there is, however, one final aspect of the radical character of evil, that is its inextirpability, at least through human efforts. Though Kant believes, as we shall see, in what he variously refers to as moral revolution and moral reform, however extensive these might be in instituting a programme of radical good, they are finally unable to remove radical evil. The best, it would appear, that is to be expected is that it can be overcome.

This evil is radical, because it corrupts the ground of all maxims; it is, moreover, as a natural propensity, inextirpable by human powers, since extirpation could occur only through good maxims, and cannot take place when the ultimate subjective ground of all maxims is postulated as corrupt; yet at the same time it must be possible to overcome it, since it is found in man, a being whose actions are free.⁴⁸

Before pursuing the possibilities of moral reform, we need, however, to look at the historical, the Scriptural representation of the origin and nature of evil which Kant offers as a supplement to the 'purely rational representation'. Kant is interested here in explaining not simply how it is that evil originated in time but also how it assumed its corrupting character in the lives of all

persons. He acknowledges that the Genesis account does not begin, as does the rational representation which he offers, with sin resulting from a pre-existent propensity, but he believes that the two accounts - Biblical and rational - are nonetheless reconcilable inasmuch as the Biblical account is interested in evil's introduction into the world in general while his own account focuses on evil's origin in the lives of specific agents.

The foregoing [the rational representation of evil] agrees well with that manner of presentation which the Scriptures use, whereby the origin of evil in the human race is depicted as having a beginning, this beginning being presented in a narrative, where in what in its essence must be considered as primary...appears as coming first in time. According to this account, evil does not start from a propensity thereto as its underlying basis, for otherwise the beginning of evil would not have its source in freedom; rather does it start from sin.... The state of man prior to all propensity to evil is called the state of innocence.⁴⁹

This state of innocence is ended, Kant argues, by the moral law which according to Scripture became known in the form of a prohibition (Genesis II 16-17). Instead of following the unconditional character of the moral law, making it the only adequate incentive 'man looked about for other incentives' (Genesis III, 6) such as can be good only conditionally (namely, so far as they involve no infringement of the law).

He then made it his maxim...to follow the law of duty, not as duty, but, if need be, with regard to other aims. Thereupon he began to call in question the severity of the commandment which excludes the influence of all other incentives; they by sophistry he reduced obedience to the law to the merely conditional character of a means (subject to the principle of self-love); and finally adopt into his maxim of conduct the ascendancy of the sensuous impulse over the incentive which spring from the law - and thus occurred sin (Genesis III, 6).⁵⁰

Notice then, that the character of evil is precisely the same as in the rational representation, it is the simultaneous adoption of the maxims of both self-love and respect for the moral law. Kant concludes from this Scriptural reading the same lesson as from the a priori account, 'that we daily act in the same way, and that therefore 'in Adam all have sinned and still sin', which is quite remarkable in that his text, Genesis, fails to provide the basis for any inference about the universal depravity of persons. Indeed, his quotation in support of this position is from St. Paul (Romans V 12), not from Genesis, though Paul's gloss is generally taken as the basis for the orthodox Christian claim about the universality of sin.

This conclusion by Kant about sin originating in Adam's transgression is remarkable not least because it so clearly contradicts his own position about evil as something that must be personally imputed. As he notes just prior to his discussion of the Biblical view, 'In the search for the rational origin of evil actions, every such action must be regarded as though the individual had fallen into it directly from a state of innocence.'⁵¹ The rational account of the origin of evil must assume then not merely individual responsibility, but a certain measure of conceptual inexplicability in that the reason for the choice of the maxim of self-love, like all other spontaneous exercises of the will, is finally beyond reason itself. 'But the rational origin of this perversion of our will whereby it

makes lower incentives supreme among its maxims, that is, of the propensity to evil, remains inscrutable to us....'⁵²

Rationally this means, of course, that we cannot demonstrate that all men must be evil by definition, something that Kant believes is presumably open to the Biblical account.

Moreover, Kant's use of Paul's conclusion about the universality of sin deriving from Adam is even more extraordinary given his claims that 'the most inept' account of the 'spread and propagation of this evil...is that which describes it as descending to us as an inheritance from our first parents....'⁵³

This confusion is clarified in part by recalling that Kant is interested in the Biblical account only as a confirmation about the nature of radical evil in terms of the self-chosen inversion of one's maxims. He acknowledges that contemporary men cannot think of themselves as innocent as did Adam and Eve because of their propensity to evil. Nevertheless he believes that persons can intelligently 'address ourselves to the explanation of evil in terms of its beginning in time', but only through examining our previous life in 'search for the causes of each deliberate transgression...far back to that period wherein the use of reason had not yet developed....'⁵⁴ This explanation closely parallels the one found in the Conjectural Beginning in that the closest that one can come to finding evil's origin is to chart it to the encounter between primitive reason and vigorous desire. Kant, in that reading of

Genesis, had interpreted Adam and Eve's 'fall' in precisely that way. Here, however, he speaks of the 'first man' as 'already in full command of the use of his reason....', which suggests that Adam and Eve are more culpable for their transgression of the moral law, given their rational abilities, than every subsequent person. Thus we explain contemporary man's evil by reference to a fall from innocence occasioned at least in part by the encounter of undeveloped reason with the inclination of self-love, while we account for, on the Biblical record at least, Adam and Eve's evil on the basis of a rational decision to adopt a maxim other than the moral law. This does nothing, of course, to reconcile the discrepancy in terms of evil's origin between the account offered in the Conjectural Beginning and Religion.

Kant does however try to provide some consistency between the two accounts and at the same time use the Biblical reading to go some way toward answering the question as to where the 'moral evil in us could originally have come'⁵⁵ by finding a 'place for evil at the creation of the world,

yet not in man, but in a spirit of an originally loftier destiny. Thus is the first beginning of all evil represented as inconceivable by us (for whence came evil to that spirit?); but man is represented as having fallen into evil only through seduction, and hence as being not basically corrupt...but rather as still capable of an improvement, in contrast to a seducing spirit....For man, therefore, who despite a corrupted heart yet possesses a good will, there remains ⁵⁶ hope of a return to the good from which he has strayed.

But is this hope based on anything more solid than the desire to avoid moral despair? Given that man's corruption is so fundamental in terms of the loss of freedom and the pervasivity of self-deceit, is it in fact not reasonable to assume that moral reform is, if not theoretically, then at least practically impossible? Has Kant, as it were, discovered a man who is so evil as to be insusceptible to reconstruction? The answer to this question is complicated by the fact that one must consider the problem from both a theoretical and a practical standpoint. At the theoretical level the problem turns on Kant's distinction above, between a corrupted heart and a good will. Though given in this discussion of radical evil to employing Biblical language, Kant's terminology here suggests something more than metaphor, for the notion of a good will, particularly in light of the conception of a good will developed in the Foundations, is crucial to the rationality of moral change.

In the Foundations we saw that Kant thought of the good will as the will which acted in accordance with the moral law, that is the will that was free not merely in the negative but the positive sense. In light of this understanding it followed that most persons would be at best only potentially good-willed inasmuch as most were guided by the maxim of self-love rather than the objectivity of the moral law. Given this understanding of the good will, most persons could not, we suggested, be the absolute ends which Kant believed them to be, a conclusion that the advent of

radical evil seems only to reinforce. How then, can Kant suddenly, in the midst of a discussion about radical evil, suggest that man's possibilities for moral reform are secured by the possession of a good will? The answer lies in the fact that between the Foundations and indeed, the second Critique and Religion Kant has elaborated a revised doctrine of the good will which hinges on a distinction between what he calls Wille and Willkür. Willkür denotes the will in its most familiar aspect, that of a faculty of desire which chooses between alternatives. In this sense, its choices are made on the basis of largely utilitarian estimates, though it is not, Kant insists an animal instinct which can choose nothing except that which generates the most pleasure. Willkür is thus free in a negative sense - it has the power of choice between alternatives, it can determine its own maxims of conduct, though it is susceptible to sensible influences from the natural world.

Wille, on the other hand does not make choices at all, it is simply the representation of the universality, objectivity, and rationality of the moral law within the agent: it is what in effect makes positive freedom - the acceptance of the categorical imperative - possible. Wille then serves to remind Willkür of the existence of the moral law, of the possibilities for genuine freedom in adopting not self-love but objectivity as the maxim of action. It does this not through action, but through what Kant simply

refers to as moral feeling, the respect that all agents must acknowledge for the moral law. As John Silber observes

Unlike Willkür, however, Wille does not make decisions or adopt maxims; it does not act. Rather it is the source of a strong and ever present incentive in Willkür, and, if strong enough to be adopted by Willkür into the maxim of its choice, Wille "can determine the Willkür" and then "it is practical reason itself...." Wille expresses the possibility of autonomy which is presupposed by transcendental freedom. The Wille represents the will's own demand for self-fulfillment by commanding Willkür, that aspect of the will which can either fulfill or abnegate its freedom, to actualize its free nature by willing in accordance with the law...of freedom. The most important difference between Wille and Willkür is apparent here. Whereas Willkür is free to actualize either the autonomous or heteronomous potentialities of transcendental freedom, Wille is not free at all. Wille, is rather the law of freedom, the normative aspect of the will, which as a norm is neither free nor unfree.⁵⁷

In this sense then of Wille as the moral law within, Kant can speak within Religion of corrupt hearts but good wills. An agent's Willkür may certainly have opted for the maxim of self-interest as opposed to the moral law and thus be a bad will, but Wille, as the foundation of freedom and what Kant calls personality itself, can never be corrupted. The possibility of moral change is thus secure on the theoretical level in that however radical evil might be it can never impinge on Wille, and with Wille intact, moral reform is always possible.

But does Kant's answer really provide any satisfactory degree of assurance about the prospects for human reformation? Indeed, does it answer the objections that surrounded the doctrine of man as absolute end based on the possession of a good will? It would appear not, simply

because Wille on Kant's own admission is not an acting faculty; it insures that man cannot renounce the moral law in the 'manner of a rebel', but it can never insure his conformity to it. It exists forever as a reminder of the moral life but it appears to have no power to bring that life into existence. Of course, Kant can reply, with some degree of correctness that all Wille is meant to do is to provide for the possibility not the certainty of man's moral recovery. This reply however, misses the seriousness of the problem of self-deceit in the sense that it fails to take account of the fact that evil is radical precisely because it masquerades as conformity to the demands of Wille. Given the pervasive character of self-deception how can any agent be certain that he has ever adopted the moral law as his maxim?

As for whether this reading of the good will solves the problem of man as absolute end, there too, the answer must be no. Despite the internalization of the moral law in Wille, it is difficult to see how simply the possession of Wille would make persons absolutely valuable ends. The same difficulties about the potential of Willkür submitting to Wille, that is to say the actualization of the moral law, and our intuitive beliefs that persons should be judged on their merits present themselves to the doctrine in its revised form. Again, it is really rational freedom, not persons as such, that Kant appears to believe is absolutely valuable, and the notion of Wille as a representation of

that freedom within the person still leaves unanswered the more fundamental question as to why that freedom, or more accurately, why that potential for freedom, however unrealized, should have the status that it does.

Kant, however, has another argument which he believes secures the possibility of moral change at the theoretical level and that is what might be termed the argument from the logic of moral responsibility. The argument has a variety of formulations both in Religion and indeed, throughout Kant's other works, but it centres on the claim, in itself quite uncontroversial, that reasonably to assign responsibility, agents must be free in some sense. 'Man himself must make or have made himself into whatever, in a moral sense, whether good or evil, he is to become. Either condition must be an effect of his free choice; for otherwise he could not be held responsible for it and could therefore be morally neither good nor evil.'⁵⁸ Moreover, as Kant notes in the first Critique, if we are to take this doctrine of human freedom seriously, certainty about the future course of action of any rational agent is in principle impossible, which means that moral change cannot, at least in principle, be discounted. This argument is further elaborated in terms of a consideration drawn from the area of moral experience, the inescapable fact of the moral imperative. 'Despite the fall, the injunction that we ought to become better men resounds unabatedly in our souls; hence this must be within our power....' Given then the

indubitability of the moral imperative to be good, it must follow that a return to goodness lies within man's powers, though perhaps not entirely within his powers. If one recalls that man's original predisposition was to goodness, and that evil is, however radical, a departure from this predisposition, then the possibility must necessarily exist for a 're-ascent from evil to good....',⁵⁹

Surely though, despite Kant's insistence, this is not obviously the case. It is easy enough to understand why Kant must hold that the defeat of radical evil is a theoretical possibility, for without this possibility the entire status of man is thrown into question and the viability of his hopes for both moral and ultimately political change is dealt a decisive blow. Without the possibility of moral reform, hope, which is to say Kant's moral faith, is unjustified in the face of moral despair. For all of this, however, it might well be suggested that moral despair, born out of the realization that moral change is forever beyond man's capacities, is just as legitimate a response to the evidence of moral experience, the facts of the moral life, as is moral faith secured by these theoretical considerations. Could not, for instance, the character of the world be just as plausibly construed, at the theoretical level, as one in which mankind consistently overestimates its prospects, as one which is productive of despair precisely because one's moral desires always exceed one's moral capacities? Indeed, it might in fact be argued

that this sort of world is the one which, given his epistemological limitations, Kant should have postulated, for if the epistemological constraints of the first Critique are productive of any single theoretical insight it is the fact that man's conceptual pretensions most certainly outpace his conceptual capabilities. Thus if there are certain things, indeed for Kant they appear in some sense to be the most crucial sort of things, which are simply forever beyond the bounds of knowledge and which thus frustrate persons in their desire for cognitive comprehensiveness, why should one assume that one's moral wishes are anymore susceptible of satisfaction? In the end this might simply be the sort of world in which ought does not imply can, a world in which capacities and abilities are hopelessly mismatched, a world in which finally radical cognitive limitations are conjoined with radical moral limitations.

Kant is, however, anxious to establish more than a simply theoretical basis for moral reform, for in addition to his arguments about the good will and the logic of moral responsibility, he also suggests at least two more practical considerations which point to the rationality of belief in moral change. The first consideration, discussed in the Metaphysic of Morals, centres on certain emotional capacities which assist in the process of moral development. Kant refers to these as the 'Preliminary Concepts of the Mind's Aesthetic Receptiveness to Concepts of Duty as Such' and they include moral feeling, 'our susceptibility to feel

pleasure or pain merely from being aware that our actions are consistent with or contrary to the law of duty',⁶⁰, conscience, 'practical reason holding man's duty before him',⁶¹, love of one's neighbour and reverence for oneself. We cannot, of course, have a duty to acquire any of these, for it is only by them that we can form any notion of duty at all, though we do have a duty to strengthen their role in our lives through cultivating them. Of the four, Kant seems to consider conscience, love and self-esteem to be the most important.

Conscience, that 'consciousness of an inner court in man....',⁶² functions very much on the double self model that characterizes self-deception, in that one is simultaneously both guilty party and judge. Conscience counts toward man's return from evil in this sense precisely because it is an inescapable feature of personhood that however much ignored cannot be completely silenced.

Every man has a conscience and finds himself watched, threatened, and, in general, kept in an attitude of respect...by an inner judge; and this power of watching over the law in him is not something that he himself...makes, but something incorporated in his being. It follows him like his shadow when he plans to escape. He can indeed numb himself or put himself to sleep by pleasure and distractions, but he cannot avoid coming to himself or waking up from time to time; and when he does, he hears at once its fearful voice. He can at most, in the extremity of corruption, induce himself to pay no more attention to it, but he still cannot help hearing it.⁶³

While not as clearly involving, as does self-deceit, a connexion between the phenomenal and the noumenal,

conscience does nonetheless involve a confrontation of the self with an inner person of sorts.

Now this inherent intellectual and...moral disposition called conscience has something peculiar about it: although its business is an affair of man with himself, man yet sees himself necessitated by his reason to carry it on as if at the bidding of another person. For this action is the bringing of a case...before a court; and to think of man accused by his conscience as one and the same person with the judge is an absurd way of representing a court of justice, since then the prosecutor would always lose--hence for every duty man's conscience will have to conceive someone other than himself...as the judge of his actions; otherwise it would be in contradiction with itself. This other may be a real person or a merely ideal person which reason itself produces. The man who accuses and judges himself in conscience must think of himself as a twofold personage, a doubled self who, on the one hand, has to stand in fear and trembling at the bar of the tribunal which is yet entrusted to him, but who, on the other hand, must himself administer the office⁶⁴ of judge which he holds by inborn authority.

At one point, in a long footnote following the discussion of conscience, Kant does in fact suggest that conscience may be explained best, at least from the 'viewpoint of practical knowledge', in the context of noumenal-phenomenal selves, even though 'there is no theoretical knowledge of the causal relation of the intelligible to the sensible.'⁶⁵ 'But man as the subject of moral legislation which proceeds from the concept of freedom and in which he is subject to a law that he himself gives (homo noumenon) is to be considered different...from man as a member the sensible world who is endowed with reason.'⁶⁶ Thought of in this fashion, conscience appears very much like Wille in that both

represent the force of the moral law in the lives of persons.

Conjoined with conscience in the enterprise of morality are love of man and reverence. Love as a duty, Kant notes, is 'logically impossible', a position which is consistent with the exposition of self-love and radical evil in which self-love was conceptualized as that which rendered objectivity impossible and in which respect for the interests of others was enjoined as the minimal condition necessary for society. Kant, however, does speak of love for others as a counter to self-love and as something which in conjunction with objectivity makes the moral life possible. In this sense, love, even within the Metaphysic of Morals does become a duty.⁶⁷ Is there, then an obvious contradiction between love as duty and love as a moral feeling? It would appear not if one attends to Kant's understanding of feeling. In his discussion of the dispositions which assist one in the process of morality Kant is thinking about love as feeling and it is logically contradictory to enjoin a feeling as a duty. 'Love is a matter of feeling, not of will, and I cannot love because I will to, still less because I ought to (i.e. I cannot be necessitated to love).'⁶⁸ This sense of love as feeling is to be distinguished from love as the duty of helping others to achieve their ends, which is what Kant speaks of in the section 'On Duties of Love To Other Men' as the 'duty of making others' ends my own....'⁶⁹ Kant's point seems to be

that the adoption of others' ends as love conceived of in terms of duty will, if persisted in, finally lead to love conceived of as feeling.

If a man practices it often and succeeds in realizing his purpose, he eventually comes to feel for those he has helped. Hence the saying: you ought to love your neighbour as yourself, does not mean: you should immediately (first) love him and (afterwards) through the medium of this love do good to him. It means, rather: do good to your fellow-man, and this will give rise to love of man in you.

Closely allied to love is reverence for man's own person, which, like conscience, moral feeling and love, is a 'special kind of feeling' which works toward moral progress in a double sense. First, strictly with respect to oneself it provides the basis for certain actions, for securing certain foundational dispositions and capacities as an agent without which morality itself would be impossible. Thus, for instance, reverence for oneself would of necessity prevent suicide. But reverence also works toward morality outside the compass of what Kant refers to as duties to oneself in that it provides the basis for one's respect for others, indeed, for one's recognition of others as absolute ends. While Kant has, as we have seen, a variety of arguments about the status of persons as absolute ends, his belief is, in many respects, in the last analysis an intuitional one which finds its foundation in a characterization of one's own nature that is universalized.

But Kant has another practical argument in support of moral change aside from the consideration of emotional

capacities, an argument based on the 'archetype' who 'has come down to us from heaven and has assumed our humanity.'⁷¹ Given the usual picture of Kant as typical Enlightenment deist, this introduction of the life of Jesus as a guarantee of the possibility of moral reform no doubt appears decidedly odd. But such overt theistic overtures, rather than provoking the embarrassment typified by Goethe, should rather lead to a reconsideration of the appropriateness of reading Kant as a deist. The full argument about Kant's deist credentials goes beyond the compass of this work, but we do wish to suggest that Kant appears to have reached the conclusion in Religion that man's character cannot be recused from radical evil, and that freedom cannot be saved except through some sort of theistic supplement which transcends the austere parameters of Enlightenment deism. These concessions to a more traditional though not unqualified theism are evident throughout Religion, but are perhaps most obvious in Kant's discussion of the roles of Jesus and of grace in moral change.

Kant's use of both of these 'ideas' is restrained by the formal considerations of his epistemology and by his aversion to the emotional excesses of 'enthusiast' religion. The idea of an archetype that has come down from heaven need not have its counterpart in a particular historical event, as 'from the practical point of view this idea is completely -- real in its own right, for it resides in our morally-legislative reason.'

We ought to conform to it; consequently we must be able to do so.... We need, therefore, no empirical example to make the idea of a person morally well-pleasing to God our archetype; this idea as an archetype is already present in our reason.... According to the law, each man ought really to furnish an example of this idea in his own person; to this end does the archetype reside always in the reason: and this, just because no example in outer experience is adequate to it; for outer experience does not disclose the inner nature of the disposition but merely allows of an inference ⁷²about it though not one of strict certainty.

A supernatural archetype is thus not merely unnecessary, since we can find the idea of moral perfection resident within ourselves, but moreover, since it carries with it all the legitimate skepticism that surrounds any non-natural event, its incomprehensibility actually hinders 'the adoption of the idea of such a person for our imitation.'⁷³ In this sense, then, the conception of a historical Jesus appears to add little to the case for moral reform. Indeed, the argument of the archetype is placed entirely within the context of the logic of moral responsibility 'We ought to conform to it; consequently we must be able to do so....'⁷⁴

These deist readings are, however, undermined by a close attention to what Kant actually says about the historical Jesus as archetype in Book Two and in Book Three. Kant, for instance, makes it clear that this notion of moral perfection, of triumph over radical evil, though in principle something possible to human reason, in nonetheless something which human reason seems not to have produced.

But just because we are not the authors of this idea, and because it has established itself in man without our comprehending how human nature could

have been capable of receiving it, it is more appropriate to say that this archetype has come down to us from heaven and has assumed our humanity (for it is less possible to conceive how man, by nature evil, should of himself lay aside evil and raise himself to the ideal of holiness, than that the latter should descend to man and assume⁷⁵ humanity which is, in itself, not evil).

Man's hope for moral change for becoming 'acceptable to God' comes about 'through a practical faith in this Son of God (so far as He is represented as having taken upon Himself man's nature).'⁷⁶

In other words, he, and he alone, is entitled to look upon himself as an object not unworthy of divine approval who is conscious of such a moral disposition as enables him to have a well-grounded confidence in himself and to believe that, under like temptations and afflictions...he would be loyal unswervingly to the archetype of humanity and, by faithful imitation, remain true to his exemplar.

The importance that Kant attaches to Jesus in terms of moral change is also evident in his defense of his death as a moral act as opposed to the interpretations of Bahrddt and Reimarus who read it in terms of suicide or political intrigue. Even more decisive, however, is Kant's discussion of the importance of Jesus in his account, closely patterned on Anselm's ransom theory of the atonement, of how the good principle ultimately triumphs over the 'legal claim' of evil in the live of persons. Here Kant makes it clear that the life of the historical Jesus, whom he constantly refers to as the Son of God, hardly a typical deist characterization, is crucial for moral reform not merely in the sense that it provides a symbol, a representation necessary for

philosophers of how the process of moral change might occur, but as an empirical truth that demonstrates moral perfection to be a genuine possibility. Thus in speaking about both Jesus' life and death, Kant notes that

This death...was therefore a manifestation of the good principle, that is, of humanity in its moral perfection, and an example for everyone to follow. The account of this death ought to have had, and could have had, the greatest influence upon human hearts and minds at that time, and indeed, at all times; for it exhibited the freedom of the children of heaven in most striking contrast to the bondage of a mere son of earth. Yet the good principle has descended in mysterious fashion from heaven into humanity not at one particular time alone but from the first beginnings of the human race.... That is, by example...he opens the portals of freedom to all who, like him, choose to become dead to everything that holds them fettered to life on earth to the detriment of morality; and he gathers together among them, "a people for his possession, zealous of good works" and under his sovereignty, while he abandons to⁷⁸ their fate all those who prefer moral servitude,

Lest one become too sanguine about moral change Kant is careful to note that there are a variety of difficulties which stand in the way of the 'appropriation of this righteousness' of the archetype for our own. One problem centres on the fact that in the lives of persons other than Jesus the disposition to a life of holiness must count as the actual life. '...The distance separating the good which we ought to effect in ourselves from the evil whence we advance is infinite, and the act itself, of conforming our course of life to the holiness of the law, is impossible of execution in any given time.'⁷⁹ Kant believes the answer to this problem is to be found in the familiar formula of the obligation of the moral law: 'A change of heart such as this

must be possible because duty requires it.'⁸⁰ and in the fact that God appears to count our endless approximation to moral perfection as in fact possession of such perfection.

But we may also think of this endless progress of our goodness towards conformity to the law, even if this progress is conceived in terms of actual deeds, or life-conduct, as being judged by Him who knows the heart, through a purely intellectual intuition, as a completed whole....⁸¹

Another, and equally serious difficulty, presents itself in the guise of moral constancy, that is to say the problem of moral regression. How, Kant asks, can we be certain of the unchangeableness of our new moral disposition such that we can know that we will 'never fall so low as again to love evil'?⁸² The nature of freedom itself of course makes any sort of certainty with respect to moral action theoretically impossible and the severely radical character of evil makes one suspicious about the durability of moral change, however sincere. As Kant notes, 'man is never more easily deceived than in what promotes his good opinion of himself.'⁸³ In the end all that one can offer is conjecture based on the constancy with which one has held to the moral law since one adopted it. As with the moral enterprise in general, the foundation of belief is finally hope.

It is true,...that with the man, who through a sufficiently long course of life, has observed the efficacy of these principles of goodness, from the time of their adoption, in his conduct, that is in the steady improvement of his way of life, can still only conjecture from this that there has been a fundamental improvement in his inner disposition. Yet he has reasonable grounds for hope as well. Since such improvements, if only

their underlying principle is good, ever increase his strength for future advances, he can hope that he will never forsake this course during his life on earth but will press on with ever-increasing courage.... All this may he reasonably hope because, on the strength of what he has observed in himself up to the present, he can look upon his disposition as radically improved.⁸⁴

This hope is secured, not merely through our own efforts, but also through the work of the Holy Spirit who 'presiding over us...creates in us, though only indirectly, a confidence in its own permanence and stability, and is our Comforter...whenever our lapses make us apprehensive of its constancy.'⁸⁵

By far the most significant problem with respect to one's counting the life of Jesus as a token of moral reform is to be found in the fact that however much one might adopt the maxim of the moral law and however consistently one might adhere to this maxim, one 'nevertheless started from evil, and this debt he can by no possibility wipe out.'

For he cannot regard the fact that he incurs no new debts subsequent to his change of heart as equivalent to having discharged his old ones. Neither can he, through future good conduct, produce a surplus over and above what he is under obligation to perform at every instant, for it is always his duty to do all the good that lies in his power. This debt which is original, or prior to all the good a man may do--this, and no more, is what we referred to in Book One as the radical evil in man--this debt can never be discharged by another person....⁸⁶

The possibility of a vicarious atonement, in which man's debt to God is discharged by Jesus, is obviously unacceptable to Kant. Yet the ability of man to satisfy the divine judgement is also in doubt, since this would require

'endless punishment.'⁸⁷ Kant's solution is to characterize the ills of the world as in fact 'punishments whereby satisfaction is rendered to divine justice.'⁸⁸ These punishments occur during the actual process of moral reform which Kant, employing Biblical language, describes as the 'laying off of the old man and the putting on of the new.'

The coming forth from the corrupted into the good disposition is, in itself...a sacrifice and an entrance upon a long train of life's ills. These the new man undertakes in the disposition of the Son of God, that is, merely for the sake of the good, though really they are due as punishments to another, namely to the old man (for the old man is indeed morally another). Although the man (regarded from the point of view of his empirical nature as a sentiment being) is physically the self-same guilty person as before and must be judged as such before a moral tribunal and hence by himself; yet, because of his new disposition, he is (regarded as an intelligible being) morally another in the eyes of a divine judge for ⁸⁹whom this disposition takes the place of action.

Once again, it is the logic of noumenal-empirical relations which makes the process of moral change at least in principle intelligible, for while there is no change, at least in one sense, in the empirical person following the adoption of 'his new disposition' there is change in moral standing in terms of the 'intelligible being', a change secured through disposition counting as action. As Kant notes in a footnote accompanying this account

...because this disposition contains the basis for continual progress in the reparation of this deficiency, it does, as an intellectual unity of the whole, take the place of action carried to its perfect consummation.... Everything (and this comprises all the miseries and ills of life in general) that would be due him as punishment in that quality (of the old man) he gladly takes upon himself in his quality of new man simply for the

sake of the good. So far as he is a new man, consequently, these sufferings are not ascribed to him as punishments at all.⁹⁰

In the end then none of these difficulties--dispositions counting as possession, the possibility of moral backsliding, not even the satisfaction of one's debt to the divine judge--count against at least the possibility of moral reformation to be found in the archetype of Jesus. Yet, whatever the hope for moral change, Kant is realistic enough to acknowledge that even in the actions of Jesus the evil principle has not been conquered 'for its kingdom still endures, and certainly a new epoch must arrive before it is overthrown....'⁹¹ And it is to this process of 'overthrow' that we must now turn.

III

Though occasionally mixing arguments designed to demonstrate the possibility of moral reform with arguments about how such reform actually happens, Kant, for the most part, attempts to keep his argumentative strategies distinct. In part this is necessitated by what he believes to be the epistemic considerations surrounding each of the respective sorts of arguments. The arguments suggesting the possibility of moral change are, Kant believes, invulnerable to either logical or empirical refutation inasmuch as they are founded on the logic of moral responsibility and the theoretical unpredicability of any person's future actions.

We argued, however, that these sorts of considerations are far less secure than Kant believes them to be. This is even more obviously this case with the argument based on the life and character of Jesus, something which Kant's tentative use of this argument itself suggests. It is not merely that this argument must contend with the skepticism, wide-spread at least from the Enlightenment onward, about recovering any sufficiently reliable picture of the historical Jesus on which to found a claim about his life and teachings, but more crucially that it is not at all clear what relevance the moral life of a divine man has to the struggles of strictly human persons caught in radical evil. That is to say if Jesus is the Son of God, then it is difficult to count his moral character as anything other than a necessary feature of his divine nature and certainly not as something that is achieved in time. And if this is the case, then that character, however commendable, can provide no assurance about the prospects for human persons in their attempts at moral change.

In some ways Kant appears, at least at the informal level, to realize how completely tenuous this entire logic of moral reformation actually is, in that, for instance, his emphasis in his historical accounts of human development on Nature's use of man's disposition to egocentricity for the ultimate good, is completely absent from Religion. Though still optimistic, the optimism of Religion is an optimism founded on the prospects of an at least partially divinely-

facilitated moral conversion. This means, of course, that the epistemic status of the arguments which seek to explicate the process of moral change is quite distinct from those which sought to establish nothing more than the bare possibility of such a process taking place. There is thus nothing comparable to the logic of moral responsibility argument that Kant can produce in order to make the process of changing from radical evil to radical good logically impeccable. The most that we can expect here is a general argument, cast in the context of considerations arising out of 'moral faith', about hope in the face of evil's persistent character and the inscrutability of divine purposes.

Man cannot attain naturally to assurance concerning such a revolution, however, either by immediate consciousness or through the evidence furnished by the life which he has hitherto led; for the depths of the heart (the subjective first ground of his maxims) are inscrutable to him. Yet he must be able to hope through his own efforts to reach the road which leads thither....⁹²

All of this does not mean, however, that Kant is prepared at the end to abandon either man in general or the process of his moral change. What it does mean is that his arguments are extraordinarily loose textured and quite often run counter to the epistemological constraints of the critical philosophy. Within the context of a moral faith, then, Kant offers two sorts of clues as to how the sovereignty of the good might be reasserted over the dominion of radical evil. The first centres on what might be termed a cognitive revolution involving a return to the

proper order of incentives, the adoption of the moral law rather than self-love as one's foundational maxim. Kant is careful to note that while man cannot be rid of the propensity to evil he can, nevertheless attempt to diminish the scope of such a propensity by changing his maxim and beginning a life of moral reform. This process of change is characterized by Kant in at least two ways: first, as a revolution in which one becomes a new man through the adoption of a new maxim, something that appears to be less process and much more instantaneous, and second as a gradual reform in which the original predisposition to good, which was never lost so much as supplanted, is gradually strengthened until it irresistably structures the moral life of the person.

How it is possible for a naturally evil man to make himself a good man wholly surpasses our comprehension; for how can a bad tree bring forth good fruit? But since, by our previous acknowledgement, an originally good tree...did bring forth evil fruit, and since the lapse from good into evil is no more comprehensible than the re-ascent from evil to good, the possibility of this last cannot be impugned. For despite the fall, the injunction that we ought to become better men resounds unabatedly in our souls.... The restoration of the original predisposition to good in us is therefore not the acquiring of a lost incentive for good, for the incentive which consists in respect for the moral law we have never been able to lose, and were such a thing possible, we could never get it again. Hence the restoration is but the establishment of the purity of this law as the supreme ground of all our maxims, whereby it is not merely associated with other incentives, and certainly is not subordinated to any such (to inclinations) as its conditions, but instead must be adopted, in its entire purity, as an incentive adequate in itself for the determination of the will.⁹⁵

The themes here are familiar ones, from the possibility of moral change as a necessary dimension of genuine freedom to the characterization of radical evil as the simultaneous adoption of the maxims of the moral law and self-interest. But alongside of these familiar arguments is an account of how moral reform proceeds, namely through the 'establishment of the purity of this law as the supreme ground of all our maxims...' This adoption of the moral law as the sole maxims of conduct is different from what Kant refers to as the 'gradual reformation' of character. The maxim of the moral law is adopted in a single moment of decision and is thus a radical change, a 'revolution' in terms of one's moral dispositions. Kant's explanation here proceeds at two levels. On the one level, he provides an account of moral change which he believes is consistent with our normal empirical experiences, that is to say one which speaks both of the moment at which we change our foundational moral attitude and the gradual process by which this new attitude comes to influence our moral personality in all its dimensions. On another level, however, he again introduces the notion of a two-fold change, change in our noumenal and empirical characters. The change in one's empirical self can be described as a gradual reform of one's 'sensuous nature', while the change in one's noumenal character is nothing less than a revolution. The difference is explained in Kant's terms by the fact that the adoption of maxims can only take place at the noumenal level. In this way the

problem of moral reform can be read as first changing the foundation of one's maxim at the noumenal level and then bringing this change about--albeit gradually--at the empirical level. Kant speaks in the following passage of this process in terms of what he calls virtue's empirical and intelligible character.

The man who adopts this purity into his maxim is indeed not yet holy by reason of this act (for there is a great gap between the maxim and the deed). Still he is upon the road of endless progress toward holiness. When the firm resolve to do one's duty has become habitual, it is also called the virtue of conformity to law; such conformity is virtue's empirical character.... Virtue here has as its steadfast maxim conduct conforming to law; and it matters not whence come the incentives required by the will for such conduct. Virtue in this sense is won little by little and, for some men, requires long practice...during which the individual passes from a tendency to vice, through gradual reformation of his conduct and strengthening of his maxims, to an opposite tendency. For this to come to pass a change of heart is not necessary, but only a change of practices.... But if a man is to become not merely legally, but morally, a good man...that is, a man endowed with virtue in its intelligible character...and one who knowing something to be his duty, requires no incentive other than this representation of duty itself, this cannot be brought about through gradual reformation so long as the basis of the maxims remains impure, but must be effected through a revolution in the man's disposition (a going over to the maxim of holiness of the disposition). He can become a new man only by a kind of rebirth, as it were ^a₄ new creation...and a change of heart.

The change in one's maxim at the noumenal level thus makes one merely 'susceptible' to goodness, only as one's empirical life manifests this change does one become 'a good man'. Indeed, at some points Kant speaks as if only God can legitimately speak of a moral revolution at all since 'in

the judgement of men, who can appraise themselves and the strength of their maxims only by the ascendancy which they win over their sensuous nature in time, this change must be regarded as nothing but an ever-during struggle toward the better....'⁹⁵ At best, it would appear that the only 'final' answer that can be given to the question of how man, who is corrupt 'in the very ground of his maxims' can 'bring about this revolution by his own powers and of himself become a good man'⁹⁶ is that provided by hope.

There is no reconciliation possible here except by saying that man is under the necessity of, and is therefore capable of, a revolution in his cast of mind.... That is, he can hope in the light of that purity of the principle which he has adopted as the supreme maxim of his will, and of its stability, to find himself upon the good...path of continual progress from bad to better.

But is hope and God's counting this progress as an already effected unity enough to make this notion of a cognitive revolution viable? It would appear not. For one thing, Kant's account of how the subordination of the moral law to self-love is reversed fails to consider his own account of the radical nature of evil, an account which located evil in a large measure in the person's capacity for self-deceit, for misconstruing their true moral character. If one is as genuinely self-deceived about one's maxims as Kant suggests, and it should be recalled that without such radical self-deception Kant has no way to coherently account for the subordination of the moral law, then it is unlikely that one can effect, through one's own efforts, which Kant considers necessary in terms of moral responsibility, the

sort of cognitive revolution which is necessary for moral change to take place. In effect, Kant appears to have discovered a person who is so radically evil that reform is logically impossible. Moreover, this difficulty is compounded by a second and no less significant problem, namely that the distinction, introduced in the context of noumenal-phenomenal relations, between moral revolution as momentary and moral reform as gradual is incoherent, again strictly in terms of Kant's own argument. Why, it might be asked, even assuming that we can form any coherent notion of what it is for a noumenal self to effect an empirical self, especially with respect to such a problematically causal thing as virtue, would we need to argue for gradual reform of the empirical self at all? Surely a self which can overcome the sophistry of self-deceit and effect a revolution in its maxims, a revolution of admittedly substantial proportions, could bring its empirical counterpart into order in the short rather than the long term. Indeed, given the character of what we know of the noumenal self, which quite strictly ought to be nothing, and in fact is when Kant becomes sufficiently baffled by the conceptual mess of moral change, Kant's allowances for moral failing, for the gap between maxim and deed are quite inexplicable.

But at this point, it is well to recall that Kant has at least two accounts about how radical evil is to be overcome, and we have focused as yet only upon the first.

The key to understanding the second is to be found in the character of radical evil itself, which, it will be remembered, is radical in part precisely because it is 'inextirpable by human powers....'⁹⁸ But what of super-human power? Can Kant allow any sort of supernatural assistance to persons in their attempts to become good? Perhaps the most concise answer to this question is that he cannot within the context of the critical philosophy strictly conceived, but he nonetheless does. The concept which Kant employs to describe this supernatural aid in the moral process is grace, and his discussions about it are difficult not simply because of his conceptual hesitations about employing the idea but also because they are scattered throughout Religion and never brought together.

From the outset, two problems plague Kant's use of the idea of grace. First, despite the fact that it is introduced in order to make sense of the process of moral revolution, Kant insists that it lies outside the bounds of sense and hence resists all attempts at explication.

But we cannot know anything at all about supernatural aid--whether a certain moral power, perceptible to us, really comes from above, or indeed, on what occasions and under what conditions it may be expected. Hence apart from the general assumption that grace will effect in us what nature cannot, provided only we have made the maximum use of our own powers, we will not be able to make any further use of this idea, either as to how (beyond a constant striving after a good life) we might draw down to us its cooperation, or how we might determine on what occasions to expect it. This idea is wholly transcendent; and it is even salutary to hold it, as a sacred thing, at a respectful distance, lest, under the illusion of performing miracles ourselves or observing

miracles within us, we render ourselves unfit for all use of reason or allow ourselves to fall into the indolence of awaiting from above⁹⁹ in passive leisure, what we should seek within.

Kant's motives here in insisting on the conceptual indeterminacy of grace are thus various, ranging from at least a formal adherence to the epistemological strictures of the first Critique through a perhaps quite genuine awe and reverence in the face of such a holy mystery, to a dislike for organized religion's domestication of the idea of supernatural aid through its talk of the 'means of grace', a phrase and concept which Kant found both aesthetically and intellectually repellent. But whatever the motives, the outcome in terms of the idea's explanatory power is still the same: without being able to provide at least some account of how grace effects moral change the idea seems unhelpful as part of an explanatory framework designed to lay bare the workings of ethical renewal.

Second, Kant's unwillingness to abandon a rigorous conception of human freedom and responsibility means that his account of what might be called the logic of grace will not work. Given the nature of radical evil with its pervasive self-deception, grace must, of necessity, precede moral reform in the sense of allowing persons to perceive themselves as self-deceived and evil and hence in need of changing their basic maxim. Without grace as a sort of epistemic awakening which allows one to see oneself as one actually is, the voice of the moral law within, however persistent, must be unavailing. Kant, however, denies that

grace functions as epistemic enlightenment, indeed, denies that it functions at all prior to the person's most strenuous efforts at moral reform. Grace for him is either God's counting our efforts to be good as equivalent to goodness itself or God's provision of assistance which allows us to be what through our own efforts we could never be. In either sense, however, grace is something that we may at best hope for (notice, never know to be the case) only after we have done everything within our power to achieve moral perfection.

There is no other means (and there can be no other) of becoming worthy of heavenly assistance than earnest endeavor to better in every possible way our moral nature and thus render ourselves susceptible of having the fitness¹⁰⁰ of this nature perfected for divine approval....

Kant's problem here is really the familiar theological problem of nature versus grace. Kant, in fact, in the 'General Observation' which concludes Religion, casts the problem in precisely this context.

Whatever good man is able to do through his own efforts, under laws of freedom, in contrast to what he can do only with supernatural assistance, can be called nature, as distinguished from grace.... We remain wholly in the dark as to when, what, or how much, grace will accomplish in us, and reason is left, on this score, as with the supernatural in general...without any knowledge of the laws according to which it might occur.¹⁰¹

Despite its 'hazardous' character, Kant is nonetheless unwilling to leave grace aside in his account of moral change, perhaps in part because he finally perceived it as no more incomprehensible than freedom itself. Kant's difficulty, which he describes in language reminiscent of

the first Critique as a 'remarkable antinomy of human reason',¹⁰² is finally the one of how to make sense of moral transformation, which is necessary to save man, while at the same time preserving both the character of freedom and the integrity of the moral law and God. In this sense, the 'saving faith' of which Kant speaks is a faith which quite literally saves the moral character of God, persons and the world simultaneously. And Kant's problems are to be found in the fact that his notion of grace is simply unequal to these ultimately competing salvific tasks.

Saving faith involves two elements, upon which hope of salvation is conditioned, the one having reference to what man himself cannot accomplish, namely, undoing lawfully (before a divine judge) actions which he has performed, the other to what he himself can and ought to do, ~~that~~¹⁰³ is leading a new life conformable to his duty.

Though Kant has spoken previously of the process of atonement as one in which, though unable to undo his past evil actions, man's sufferings are counted as punishments for those acts, he is now unwilling to accept anything which suggests that the suffering of another being--however morally perfect--can lawfully undo another's guilty standing before a 'divine judge'. Personal suffering, not a vicarious atonement, is required.

...it is quite impossible to see how a reasonable man, who knows himself to merit punishment, can in all seriousness believe that he needs only to credit the news of an atonement rendered for him, and to accept this atonement...in order to regard his guilt as annihilated.... No thoughtful person can bring himself to believe this, even though self-love often does ¹⁰⁴ transform the bare wish for a good...into hope....

Thus, the only way in which past wicked acts can be dealt with is through all such improvement as lies within his power. But, 'if men are corrupt by nature, how can a man believe that by himself, try as hard as he will, he can make himself a new man well-pleasing to God...!' ¹⁰⁵

This contradiction cannot be resolved through insight into causal determination of the freedom of a human being, i.e. into the causes which bring it about that a man becomes good or bad; hence it cannot be resolved theoretically, for it is a question wholly transcending the speculative capacity of our reason. But practically, the question arises: What, in the use of our free will, come first....? Where shall we start, i.e. with a faith in what God has done on our behalf, or with what we are to do to become worthy of God's assistance (whatever this may be)? In answering this question we cannot hesitate in deciding for the second alternative. ¹⁰⁶

Grace, in the end, then, leads us finally back to the imperative of moral responsibility and freedom. We may hope for grace, that is for God's help, though we may know nothing about its operation, only after we have done all that for which our freedom makes us responsible. In this fashion, freedom might be saved, but it is highly doubtful that man is, for without a grace that can initiate man's liberation from radical evil, a grace that supplements his efforts at moral reform subsequent to such liberation appears somewhat beside the point.

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Chapter Five

MAN AS CITIZEN: THE CONTOURS OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL
EXPERIENCE

Indeed these small clues are
sufficient for a wise mind; by
their means you will be enabled to
infer the rest with clarity.

I

In spite of the tensions, implicit and explicit, inherent in his attempt to make sense of radical evil through a reconciliation of autonomous man and transcendent grace and cognitive change and ineradicable self-deception, Kant is nevertheless unwilling to abandon the problem of evil with the conclusion of Book Two of Religion. The reason, however obvious, is most often overlooked in discussions of his account of radical evil which focus exclusively on the moral life of Jesus, the possibility of re-ordering one's foundational moral maxims, and the assurances of other-worldly assistance. Though, as we have argued, all of these are components of Kant's final answer to evil, they are ultimately incomplete without his account of the ethical commonwealth which, while rooted in but finally transcending the particularities of even the best-structured of political orders, provides the only sure foundation for man's victory over evil. Only within the

context of such an ethical commonwealth is there any hope of overcoming the radical evil which literally destroys persons through destroying their freedom.

However plausible these claims might appear in terms of both the whole of Kant's anthropology and more specifically Religion, they run counter to many, if not all, of the conventional readings of Kant's ethics, philosophy of religion and particularly, political philosophy, most of which see Kant in the tradition of an ethical, religious and political individualism which is adverse to any form of collective salvation. While this reading is often tempered in the case of Kant's political theory by an acknowledgement of the collectivist implications at least implicit in the notion of cosmopolitanism, it is generally still argued that the key to his politics is to be found in its emphasis upon autonomous individuals united into a society structured by law, albeit self-chosen law. That there is such a strain of individualism within Kant is undeniable, but to suggest that it represents his considered conclusion about persons, their institutions and their destiny is to ignore substantial and perhaps ultimately conclusive evidence to the contrary. Somewhat ironically, what makes the individualist thesis so strong is precisely what we have attempted to argue is the key to understanding Kant's conception of persons, that is his doctrine of freedom. But while Kant believes that freedom is both man's most distinctive capacity and his most demanding task, as he notes it 'is the inner principle of

the world'², he nonetheless also ties freedom to law. Indeed, it is only this linkage of freedom with law that is finally able to 'save freedom.'

This is perhaps most obvious in the historical strand of Kant's anthropology, particularly in the Idea where Kant argues in the Fifth Thesis that 'the greatest problem for the human race...is the achievement of a universal civic society which administers law among men.'³

The highest purpose of Nature, which is the development of all the capacities which can be achieved by mankind, is attainable only in society, and more specifically in the society with the greatest freedom. Such a society is one in which there is mutual opposition among the members, together with the most exact definition of freedom and fixing of its limits so that it may be consistent with the freedom of others.⁴

Freedom is rooted here in its genuine sense which Kant contrasts to the chimera of 'wild freedom', only in a society, a society built on both law and freedom. It is in this sense that the construction of a social order which administers law is mankind's 'greatest problem', for lawfulness without freedom is not particularly difficult to conceive, nor is freedom without lawfulness. The conceptual problem is how freedom and lawfulness, autonomy and sociability, individuality and objectivity might exist simultaneously. Kant's problem is thus the classical one of how individuals might maintain the maximum amount of liberty while at the same time living within the lawfully ordered structures of society, and while this problem carries within it the possibility of solutions which in their advocacy of personal autonomy and rights tend toward 'individualism',

the raising of the question by itself can hardly be taken as evidence of such individualism.

Still, this is not to suggest that the reading of Kant as political and ethical individualist, at least within the context of the historical works, and even within the Groundwork and the first two Critiques, is entirely inappropriate, inasmuch as there is much in all of these works which partly points in an individualist direction. Thus, for instance, to cite but three examples, Kant's epistemology with its focus on the individual knower who strives for cognitive completeness in the face of the limitations imposed by sense-bounded intelligibility, his theory of moral development and the inescapable imperatives of categorical law and personal responsibility coupled with the moral inscrutability of persons, and his insistence on man's fundamental unsocial character all tend to strengthen the case for Kant as rigorous individualist. Two considerations, however, count against accepting such evidences as conclusive. First, the accounts of persons offered in the second Critique and the Foundations, accounts which centre on the individual as absolutely valuable and the personal possession of the good will, are carefully nuanced readings of persons which implicitly if not always explicitly assume that reason, morality, freedom and finally personhood itself make sense only within the context of a moral order that is social as much as it is personal. This is particularly true with respect to the notion of the

noumenal order which pre-figures the latter idea of the ethical commonwealth. The crucial distinctions between genuine and wild, and negative and positive freedom are also further reminders of autonomy's social character in that freedom can never be legitimately sundered from lawfulness, which is to say from the guarantees of ethical impartiality, objectivity and universalizability. This same sort of nuanced individualism is to be found in the historical accounts of persons which for all of their emphasis on man's individuality root their justification for the harshness of the natural order and indeed even of Providence's stern character on the teleological perspective of the species rather than the individual. It is, as Kant never tires of reminding us, the perfection of mankind, not of individual persons, for which we must hope and work. Even the unsocial individualism of man in the state of nature is softened by Kant into the less severe doctrine of the merely 'unsocial sociability of men'⁵ in which 'man has an inclination to associate with others, because in society he feels himself to be more than man, i.e., as more than the developed form of his natural capacities.'⁶ This does not eliminate his 'strong propensity to isolate himself from others, because he finds in himself at the same time the unsocial characteristic of wishing to have everything go according to his own wish.'⁷, but it does provide the basis for his social nature to be construed as integral to his complete development as a person.

Second, even the modified individualism of the first two Critiques and the Foundations and historical works is superseded in the third Critique and Religion by a vision of human salvation as something finally realizable only through one's participation in a particular sort of society, the ethical commonwealth. While such a vision is hinted at in the kingdom of ends developed within the Foundations, the idea of Religion is far more comprehensive and decidedly less individual in that the kingdom of ends, though certainly in some sense a society, places more emphasis on the autonomy of the individual as qualifying him as end. This doctrine of ends is, as we have seen, modified in one sense by the ambiguity surrounding the qualifications for membership in such a society of ends, that is to say whether simply negative freedom or the good will (positive freedom) is a necessary condition for inclusion. But whether the notion of end centres on the capacity for choosing ends, any ends, or the quality of one's choices for ends, ends measured against the norm of the moral law and the good will, the emphasis still appears more individual than societal. Individuals exist, to be sure, within a kingdom, but it is the moral perfection of the individual, not the kingdom itself, that is central.

This moral autonomy is not completely subsumed within the ethical commonwealth of Kant's final work, for there does remain some degree of tension between the individual and society, but what tension does survive appears to be

attributable far more to practical than to theoretical considerations. The tension, and with it the movement in Kant's thought away from strictly individualist emphasizes on moral change, can be observed in a variety of places from the third Critique's focus on the maxims of human understanding which add to the individualist injunction of thinking for oneself the more cosmopolitan consideration of also thinking from the standpoint of everyone else to the Doctrine of Virtue's requirements about not merely respecting the ends of others but also adopting them as one's own. Kant's reluctance about wholeheartedly embracing the notion of a moral community as the source of moral redemption is rooted in his belief about the ultimately non-negotiable character of personal moral responsibility, something that he refuses to relinquish even in the face of the conceptual temptations offered by the doctrines of original sin and vicarious atonement. Even the idea of Jesus as moral exemplar arrives in such a carefully circumscribed fashion--stripped as it is of all accompanying means of grace--that it can hardly offend the rigour of moral accountability. The closest that Kant comes to diluting the substance of his notion of responsibility is in the concept of divine grace, but even this supernatural assistance is allowed to function within the confines of a moral structure secured entirely by one's previous ethical endeavour inasmuch as grace might complete but never precede nature.

All of this suggests once again the ambiguity that we argued characterized Kant's earlier accounts of persons. Indeed, the ambiguous role of the moral community in Religion might be said to compliment if not parallel the ambiguity of nature and culture in the historical strand of Kantian anthropology. Both nature and culture function in the earlier works in an almost dialectical way to make man, to educate him, often, it would seem, against his will. And the ethical community of Religion is just as concerned with the making of persons, though with a much subdued note of the coercive, as are these previous explanations of the transformation of persons. This ambiguity means, of course, that there is considerable uncertainty about where Kant ought to be placed in terms of the continuing controversy within the western political tradition as to where the hopes for the moral transformation of persons have the greatest prospect of fulfillment. St. Augustine, though not the first to raise the question, nevertheless poses it in terms of two sharply differing answers, answers that have assumed an almost archetypal status in subsequent debates. For Augustine, the choices are straightforwardly between the city of God and the city of man. While the political culture of the city of man might restrain the radically evil nature of men, its value is compromised by the fact that it can affect no ultimately valid transformation of man's moral character. Salvation spiritual and moral, the two are but half-heartedly held apart, is to be found only in the

transcendent heavenly city, with politics functioning simply as a vast holding operation, a bulwark against the cunning of Satan, something which figures hardly at all in the salvific order. As is to be expected, God's grace is all-determinative, suffocating in its very comprehensiveness, though Augustine resists such a conclusion, any prospects for genuine human freedom and responsibility.

Pelagius, though not immediately concerned with the possible dimensions of political culture, stands, nonetheless, in sharp contrast to Augustine's salvific vision of the heavenly city in his advocacy of human efforts, of the vitality of the free will as the source of human change. Pelagius does not completely discount grace and the heavenly city, but he is prepared to allow the city of man, the corrupted earthly city of Augustine, a far more decisive role in the moral transformation of persons. While it is the heavenly city which provides the vision of what human beings and indeed what human society ought to be, human effort and with it personal responsibility and human institutions are not rejected as fundamentally evil, but rather are seen as entirely legitimate and perhaps finally even natural features of reality.

It is tempting to read Kant with his uncompromising emphasis on responsibility, his belief in the capacities of even the most radically evil for moral change, his consistent skepticism about the status of transcendent entities and his insistence that the 'right course is not to

go from grace to virtue but rather to progress from virtue to pardoning grace', as the Enlightenment exponent of political Pelagianism. But while Kant appears to reject most if not all of the characteristic positions attached to Augustine's advocacy of the city of God, the very ambiguity that is to be found in so much of his anthropology, and most particularly in his solutions to the problem of radical evil, should caution one against placing him within the Pelagian tradition. Kant, it seems, actually falls between Augustinianism and Pelagianism, between the heavenly city and the earthly city in a way that makes him a most uncharacteristic Enlightenment figure. While most of his Enlightenment contemporaries placed their hopes for moral progress in the institutions of the at least formally secular state, such as education, coupled with a decline of formal religion, and with it religious intolerance, Kant, in Religion roots man and his hopes squarely in a heavenly city on earth, that is the ethical commonwealth. 'The Kingdom of God on earth: this is the ultimate vocation of man; Christ led us to it, but one did not understand him and the Kingdom of the priests, not that of God, was set among us.'⁸ What we wish to suggest, then, is that Kant finds the traditional answers to the problem of culture and politics, or more specifically to the problem of ethics and politics-centred on how persons might be changed, to be far too unnuanced and extreme to be finally credible. Kant, to be certain, is not unattracted to either of the prevailing standard solutions.

In Religion, for instance, he finally acknowledges what he had previously tended to avoid, the radically corrupting and destroying power of evil, both in the lives of individuals and of institutions. This acknowledgement brings him in a good many places in Religion to a position not unlike certain features of Augustinian anthropology. But what prevents Kant from an unqualified acceptance of this finally deprecating view of men and their earthly institutions is a combination of his belief in man's original predisposition to goodness, itself an undisputable testimony to his Enlightenment sympathies, and an unshakable commitment to the meaning not simply of moral discourse but the moral life in its entirety being founded on personal responsibility, and with it the possibility of self-initiated moral change. Put in a slightly different way, Kant is attracted to both the pessimism of traditional Christianity as to man's prospects for reform outside of the heavenly city and the optimism of the Enlightenment's belief in man's fundamental goodness and its commitment to education and political reform as the engines of moral change. And it is this simultaneous attraction to the heavenly and the earthly city, to divine grace and human moral effort that leads him to his proposal of the heavenly-earthly city. Kant's final answer to the problem of persons and their freedom, an answer that modifies his earlier individualism without at the same time diminishing the conceptual priority of freedom, is not thus a resolution of ambiguity but rather a

perpetuation of it. And once this is recognized, the traditional readings of Kant's politics appear for what they are, useful but finally incomplete accounts of his real answer to the problem of persons and their moral, religious, and political structures.

This does not mean that Kant's anthropology has no intrinsic connexion with his politics, even when these politics are given a conventional interpretation. Both the historical strand of Kantian anthropology with its emphasis on the development of the rational-freedom of persons, a development that finds its perfection within a civil community, and the more formal, ethical strand that centres on the essence of persons as ends in themselves set the conditions for what Kant might term possible political experience. These conditions are outlined first and most succinctly in the 1793 essay 'On the Common Saying: "This may be True in Theory, but it does not Apply in Practice"' where Kant argues that the civic state

regarded purely as a lawful state, is based on the following a priori principles:

1. The freedom of every member of society as a human being.
2. The equality of each with all the others as a subject.
3. The independence of each member of a commonwealth as a citizen.

The same principles appear later in the Metaphysics of Morals where Kant outlines what he considers must necessarily follow from a conception of men as citizens.

The members of such a society (societas civilis) or state who unite for the purpose of legislating are known as citizens...and the three rightful attributes

which are inseparable from the nature of a citizen as such are as follows: firstly, lawful freedom to obey no law other than that to which he has given his consent; secondly, civil equality in recognizing no-one among the people as superior to himself, unless it be someone whom he is just as morally entitled to bind by law as the other is to bind him; and thirdly, the attribute of civil independence which allows him to owe his existence and sustenance not to the arbitrary will of anyone else among the people, but purely to his own rights and powers as a member of the commonwealth....¹⁰

Thus, from the conception of men as absolute ends who freely choose their purposes, we obtain the first condition of political order, that the only legitimate limitations on the freedom of persons are those which maximize the freedom of all agents. In this sense, man's free nature, which in turn is a symbol of transcendental freedom itself, provides the fundamental justification for the state itself. Only as the state provides the conditions within which persons may indeed be ends through setting and attempting to realize their own ends can it claim the allegiance of rational persons. Whatever a state's beliefs about the priority of its own interests and ends, the notion of persons as ends and the conception of freedom that issues from it means that it can never force its citizens to abandon their own ends in preference for those of the state. The ends of each rational agent, so long only as they recognize the legitimacy of the ends of every other rational agent, are thus sovereign. In this fashion, the concept of man as end, which is really the concept of man's inherent dignity, supports the idea of moral equality over against the servility which Kant sees as characteristic of the

authoritarian state. Such a state demands that its subjects deny their moral equality, their equal standing as inherently valuable ends, in order to curry favour; in effect, it means that the state transforms its subjects, with their own consent, from ends into mere means. This conception of ends provides, however, for another characteristic of the political order in that, at least on Kant's terms, the status of ends extends to all rational beings, a fact which suggests that while not all the ends of rational beings are equally valuable, all rational beings are themselves equally valuable as ends. (We have noted previously--see Chapter Three--that Kant's doctrine of the good will seems to place this doctrine of the equality of all rational ends in serious jeopardy.) The actual limitations which such a principle might impose on the actions of any state might, of course, be decidedly modest inasmuch as the recognition of equal status as end separated from any recognition of the equal standing of every agent's particular ends seems to guarantee a strictly formal as opposed to material equality. This is not to discount the importance of the idea of all agents as ends in the sense of all rational-free beings equally able to set ends, though it does call into question the value of this claim in terms of the actual practice of politics. Kant himself, interestingly enough, appears not to allow the principle of equality derived from man's status as end any substantial material role in that the passage in the Metaphysics of

Morals which sets out the nature of men as citizens is followed immediately by one in which a distinction is introduced between active and passive citizens, with full equality being restricted to active citizens.

But the idea of men as ends in themselves provides one further condition for possible political experience, though in a somewhat less straightforward fashion than the conditions of freedom and equality. Closely, indeed, inseparably connected with freedom for Kant is lawfulness, not simply lawfulness in an abstract or general sense, but the lawfulness of the moral law. Freedom's perfection is always the perfection of the moral law, just as the ends of persons are fully realized and persons are fully ends only as they freely exist within the context of the objectivity and universality of the moral law. This intrinsic connexion of personhood with freedom and freedom with the moral law thus suggests that the model for the legal order of any legitimate state is to be found in the defining characteristic of the moral law itself, that is its absence of particularity, its indifference to special interests, its structural and substantive neutrality. In this way the structure of political order can also be connected to the structure of the good will itself inasmuch as the good will is precisely that will which accepts the 'idea of universal lawgiving' that is 'based on no interest.'¹¹ And, even more fundamentally, such legitimate political structures replicate the very laws of nature since they cohere with the

wills of rational agents which are 'designed by nature' to be wills 'giving universal laws'.¹² These connexions are admittedly more implicit than explicit, at least within the Metaphysics of Morals where Kant speaks of the ways in which the notions of freedom and equality are derived from the conception of men as citizens. They are more apparent in the discussion of man as end and the Kingdom of Ends in the Foundations and also in Perpetual Peace where Kant sets forth what he calls the 'transcendental formula of public law'--'All actions relating to the right of other men are unjust if their maxim is not consistent with publicity.'¹³, a formula which echoes the moral law's concern for objectivity and universality in its assumption that injustice, the non-objective and self-interested, can proceed only in secret.

There is thus, as should be expected if our thesis about the conceptually foundational character of Kant's anthropology is correct, a reasonably substantial connexion between Kant's formal political principles outlined in the Metaphysics of Morals and Perpetual Peace and the theory of persons which we have attempted to explicate. The really important question, however, centres on whether this connexion works in the sense of generating political principles which are not simply optional but inescapably normative for any coherent form of political experience. The question for Kant's politics is at bottom, then, the same question posed in the first Critique about the

conditions of possible experience, only now the question is confined to the realm of political life.

Unfortunately, Kant's arguments about the conditions of possible political experience appear to be as unsuccessful as his arguments about the necessary shape of experience in general. Indeed, the problem with the arguments derived from the character of persons, freedom and law, arguments which presume to demonstrate how the character of these entities shapes the structure of human existence within the state, is that they are open to the same types of objections that are brought against the arguments of the first Critique. Kant's candidates for necessary conditions for the possibility of any experience fail quite simply because it is possible to conceive of coherent experience that is not structured by them. Thus while much human experience might in fact be an experience of Euclidian space, it does not appear to be the case that all possible human space experiences must of necessity be Euclidian. While much, of course, turns in this argument on how possible experience or possible coherent experience is read, however stringently we wish to construe them, it seems clear that non-Euclidian experiences are not in principle incoherent.

And the same, somewhat regrettably, is true of the conditions for possible political experience suggested by Kant. We quite simply can imagine political experience, indeed coherent political experience, in fact we can observe such political experience, that precedes under assumptions

not merely different from, but radically opposed to Kant's allegedly normative principles. And if this is the case, then a priori privileged status, the axiomatic 'indemonstrably certain',¹⁴ character of persons as ends, of freedom and equality and even finally, the moral law itself, is highly suspect. Hence the authoritarian political society that represses freedom, institutionalizes inequality, and denies persons the status of ends is not, at the level of first principles, incoherent.

Perhaps, though, if the argument were to be recast in a slightly different form, it might be more viable. Perhaps the essential feature of Kant's claim centres on a particular reading of coherent political experience in which political experiences which do not include freedom or equality or precede from certain conceptions of persons would count as political experiences but not as coherent or genuine political experiences. Authoritarian states would thus be read as aberrant forms of political life that would ultimately perish under the burden of their self-contradictory character. Arguments of this form can be deployed on behalf of whatever foundational principles one assumes to be normative: they would provide the basis for a Marxist critique of western democracy as readily as the democrat's attack on Marxism. But despite their ubiquitous character, it is not clear that such arguments will work since the notion of coherent or genuine is given the same foundational, and hence axiomatic character, as was

previously accorded political experience. Hence, it is not immediately apparent what argumentative gain is to be had from allowing political experiences which are not predicated on persons as ends to count as political experiences, though not finally coherent or genuine political experiences, inasmuch as what is still at issue is how coherent or genuine is to be construed. Put in its most basic form, the persistence of political communities which do not recognize the inescapably foundational nature of persons as ends counts heavily against persons as ends as a necessary condition for any sort of political experience. Though of a theoretical, perhaps even a transcendental character, Kant's claim is finally, through its connexion with experience, susceptible to empirical falsification. This need not lead to the conclusion that the principle of persons as ends is not foundational in any sense, for it is conceivable that the ends principle might serve to structure other forms of experience that are not political or even social. Thus Kant's principle might in fact be true, though over a more limited range of experience than he believes to be the case. The difficulty with this argument is that the idea of persons as ends seems, at least on the face of it, to be so clearly linked to the moral and political life that to deny its foundational standing here is to cast doubt on its intrinsically foundational character.

Despite the conceptually uncertain status of persons as ends and freedom and equality, Kant never explicitly

abandons them as foundational principles for his view of political life, and thus at one level at least they can be quite plausibly seen as providing both the structure and substance of his political philosophy. We wish to argue, however, that the vision of the ethical commonwealth developed in Religion completes a crucial re-thinking of Kant's anthropology, and with it at least an implicit re-ordering of his conception of the necessary shape of social existence. While to speak of a rejection of his other notions of political theory is clearly unwarranted, the idea of a 'transcendence' of them, a transcendence occasioned by the altered anthropology of the first part of Religion, is perhaps justified.

II

What then is the character of this ethical commonwealth upon which Kant finally rests his hopes for the moral transformation of persons? Paradoxically, Kant begins his discussion of the 'Founding of the Kingdom of God On Earth' in Book Three of Religion with an abridged reiteration of his account of radical evil characterized by the same ambiguity about human prospects for moral change that dominated his earlier discussion. Thus on the one hand we are seemingly assured that persons can obtain 'freedom from the sovereignty of evil', that to 'become free, "to be freed from bondage under the law of sin, to live for

righteousness"--this is the highest prize he can win'¹⁵ and yet on the other hand counselled that the assaults of the 'evil principle' will nonetheless continue. Kant appears to believe that while one might effect a genuine change in one's moral maxim through allowing the moral law its place in preference to the law of self-interest, this change in character is continually susceptible to alteration itself. However genuine the moral transformation, such a transformation must always be perceived as inherently fragile, and thus the question which dominates the life of the morally reformed is how the victory of the 'good principle over the evil' might be perpetuated? Before Religion's recognition of the serious character of evil, Kant might have laid the responsibility for moral failure entirely at the door of the individual. Now, however, he is prepared to recognize that even while individuals remain finally responsible for their characters, the character of the other free agents among whom they live and the quality of their social order itself does play a significant part in making persons what they are.

Now man is in this perilous state through his own fault; hence he is bound at the very least to strive with all his might to extricate himself from it. But how? That is the question. When he looks around for the causes and circumstances which expose him to this danger and keep him in it, he can easily convince himself that he is subject to these not because of his own gross nature, so far as he is here a separate individual, but because of mankind to whom he is related and bound. It is not at the instigation of the former that what should properly be called the passions, which cause such havoc in his original good predisposition, are aroused. His needs are but few, and his frame of mind in providing for them is

temperate and tranquil. He is poor...only in his anxiety lest other men consider him poor and despise him on that account. Envy, the lust for power, greed, and the malignant inclinations bound up with these, besiege his nature, contented within itself, as soon as he is among men. And it is not even necessary to assume that these are men sunk in evil and examples to lead him astray; it suffices that they are at hand, that they surround him, and that they are men, for them mutually to corrupt each other's predispositions and make one another evil. If no means could be discovered for the forming of an alliance uniquely designed as a protection against this evil and for the furtherance of goodness in man--of a society, enduring, ever extending itself, aiming solely at the maintenance of morality, and counteracting evil with united forces--this association with others would keep man, however much, as a single individual, he may have done to throw off the sovereignty of evil, incessantly in danger of falling back under its dominion.¹⁶

Here we have, then, a somewhat startling departure from the early accounts of evil and responsibility, whether in the historical works, the Foundations, or even in the first part of Religion. It is not that these earlier accounts are renounced, for Kant's argument here about the social character of evil is fully consistent with his historical chronicles of human development and his discussion of the 'original predisposition to good in human nature' where the desire for community and the inclination to acquire value in the eyes of others were seen as providing the occasion for much that was regrettable in persons and their institutions. What is absent, however, from this discussion, is not merely the general context of personal ethical responsibility, but the emphasis on the particular self-initiated character of radical evil through the inversion of the proper order of incentives. Indeed, one could almost conclude from what Kant says here that evil is a product of man's social

nature, that persons would be free of radical evil if they could but be free of each other. The argument is curious then, not least of all because Kant begins the passage with the claim that 'man is in this perilous state through his own fault', an argument reminiscent of the earlier emphasis on the logic of moral responsibility, but one that seems clearly inappropriate here, given that man cannot be held responsible for his predisposition to community, from which the evils which beset him appear to derive. What is also odd is that Kant could have found room for an increased emphasis on the social nature of radical evil that was consistent with his earlier account while at the same time keeping his stringent notion of evil as flowing from the individual's own choice. In this fashion, the characterization of radical evil would simply have been enlarged to include the corruptions endemic to men living in community, while the ethical commonwealth would take its place alongside of cognitive change and grace as a means of moral change. This sort of interpretation is still possible if one reads the passage above as a description of the difficulties of maintaining the new moral man rather than an account of the sources of initial moral corruption. This distinction, of course, between initial corruption and moral backsliding seems somewhat curious in that the sources of evil, self-love and other persons, are both present at man's initial-corruption, his moral transformation, and his subsequent temptation to moral equivocation. And all of

this fails to address the more serious problem of how a will which is able to re-order its incentives, to replace self-interest with the moral law, a will which has available to it the supernatural supplement of grace could fall prey to the temptations to evil present simply in the association of persons. The most consistent interpretation is thus the one which sees here a further elaboration both of the radical character of evil, that is to say its inextirpability read as continued susceptibility to its self-deceiving nature, and of the radical measures necessary to ultimately defeat it.

In this fashion, the ethical commonwealth, along with one's own capacities for virtue, and grace becomes for Kant the absolutely necessary corrective for radical evil.

As far as we can see...the sovereignty of the good principle is attainable, so far as men can work toward it, only through the establishment and spread of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue, a society whose task and duty it is rationally to impress these laws in all their scope upon the entire human race.... A union of men under merely moral laws, patterned on the above idea, may be called an ethical, and so far as these laws are public, an ethico-civil (in contrast to a juridico-civil) society or an ethical commonwealth. It can exist in the midst of a political commonwealth and may even be made up of all its members; (indeed, unless it is based upon such a commonwealth it can never be brought into existence by man). It has, however, a special and unique principle of union (virtue), and hence a form and constitution, which fundamentally distinguish it from the political commonwealth. At the same time there is a certain analogy between them, regarded as two commonwealths, in view of which the former may also be called an ethical state, i.e., a kingdom, of virtue....

Crucial to understanding this ethical commonwealth is a distinction that Kant makes between the juridico-civil state

and the juridicial state of nature and the ethical-civil state or ethical commonwealth and the ethical state of nature. The juridico-civil state is the familiar pattern of civil institutions that orders men's lives through coercion, in which 'all alike stand socially under public-juridical laws....'¹⁸, while the ethico-civil state, the ethical commonwealth 'is that in which they are united under non-coercive laws, i.e., laws of virtue alone.'¹⁹ Seen in this manner, the juridicial state of nature and the ethical state of nature are much the same in that they both stand in sharp contrast to their normative counterparts, that is, to the juridico-civil society and the ethical commonwealth, but also in that in both 'each individual prescribes the law for himself, and there is no external law to which he, along with all others, recognizes himself to be subject. In both, each individual is his own judge, and there exists no powerful public authority to determine with legal power...what is each man's duty in every situation that arises....'²⁰ And just as one has an obligation to leave the juridicial state of nature and join the civil state, so one has a corresponding obligation to leave the ethical state of nature and enter the ethical commonwealth. In the instance of the ethical commonwealth, the obligation stems from the fact that the ethical state of nature stands opposed in its agents' exclusive concern with self-interest to the objective and universal perspective of the moral law. In one sense, one might even speak of the ethical state of

nature as a state founded on the principle of radical evil, or at the very least a state in which

the good principle, which resides in each man, is continually attacked by the evil which is found in him and also in everyone else. Men...mutually corrupt one another's moral predispositions; despite the good will of each individual, yet, because they lack a principle which unites them, they recede, through their dissensions, from the common goal of goodness and, just as though they were instruments of evil, expose one another to the risk of falling once again under the sovereignty of the evil principle. Again, just as the state of lawless external...freedom and independence from coercive laws is a state of injustice and war, each against each, which a man ought to leave in order to enter into a politico-civil state: so is the ethical state of nature one of open conflict between principles of virtue and a state of inner immorality which the natural man ought to bestir himself to leave as soon as possible.²¹

Hence, the first obligation of those who have substituted the foundational maxim of the moral law for self-love is that they leave the ethical state of nature and enter the ethical commonwealth. And nothing speaks more decisively of Kant's belief that the juridico-civil state by itself is unable to affect the finally necessary moral change in persons than his insistence that those who wish to forsake the sovereignty of evil must join the ethical-civil commonwealth. This obligation, moreover, transcends the dimensions of one's personal moral career: it is, in the most fundamental fashion an obligation to the human race itself.

Now here we have a duty which is sui generis, not of men toward men, but of the human race toward itself. For the species of rational beings is objectively, in the idea of reason, destined for a social goal, namely, the promotion of the highest as a social good. But because the highest moral good cannot be achieved merely by the exertions of the single individual toward

his own moral perfection, but requires rather a union of such individuals into a whole toward the same goal--into a system of well-disposed men, in which and through whose unity alone the highest moral good can come to pass--the idea of such a whole, as a universal republic based on laws of virtue, is an idea completely distinguished from all moral laws (which concern what we know to lie in our own power); since it involves working toward a whole regarding which we do not know whether, as such, it lies in our power ~~or~~ not. ²²

Here again is the familiar theme, which in this context provides further evidence of Kant's interest in the collective salvation of the race of rational ends, of the fulfillment of freedom's final purpose in terms of the species good, the 'social good' as Kant puts it. Whereas political society might initiate the process of man's moral development, only the ethical commonwealth is able to affect that crucial change by which 'men driven together by their natural feelings',²³ become a moral whole. In this way, the perfected freedom, which is to say the virtue of the ethical society of 'well-disposed men' appears to transcend the Kingdom of Ends of the Foundations and perhaps the Summum Bonum of the second Critique as well. Whereas the Kingdom of Ends appeared, at least on one interpretation, to admit all rational ends regardless of their moral character, the standards of admission to the ethical commonwealth are decidedly more rigorous. Though potentially universal in its expectations, the ethical commonwealth admits only those whose actions conform not simply to the letter of the moral law but to its inner intention as well. The members of the ethical commonwealth, unlike the Kingdom of Ends, are not just potentially rational-free persons, but actual ends

who in renouncing the kingdom of evil have found positive freedom. While it seems clear that the ethical kingdom transcends Kant's earlier Kingdom of Ends, there is a certain degree of uncertainty as to whether it is meant to replace the Summum Bonum. Kant speaks of the Summum Bonum but three times in Religion, but his references, while retaining the emphasis on the divine action necessary to bring about such a conjunction of virtue and happiness, also suggest an expanded role for human persons, and by implication, a movement from an other-worldly to an earthly context. In the following passage, for instance, God is clearly necessary for both the happiness and the moral union of the summum bonum, but there is at least the suggestion that this end might be realizable in an earthly, historical rather than a transcendent dimension inasmuch as it is man's inescapable obligation to work toward it.

The idea of the highest good, inseparably bound up with the purely moral disposition, cannot be realized by man himself (not only in the matter of the happiness pertaining thereto, but also in the matter of the union of men necessary for the end in its entirety); yet he discovers within himself the duty to work for this end. Hence he finds himself impelled to believe in the cooperation or management of a moral Ruler of the world, by²⁴ means of which alone this goal can be reached.

But while there is some uncertainty of the status of the ethical commonwealth with respect to the summum bonum, its role relative the civil state is unquestionably clear. Only in the ethical order, what Kant refers to as a church, is man's perfection realized and secured with freedom

finally 'saved', and the possibility opened of the kingdom of God coming to earth.

The wish of all well-disposed people is, therefore, "that the kingdom of God come, that His will be done on earth." But what preparations must they now make that it shall come to pass?

An ethical commonwealth under divine moral legislation is a church, which, so far as it is not an object of possible experience, is called the church invisible (a mere idea of the union of all the righteous under direct and moral divine world-government, an idea serving all as the archetype of what is to be established by men).²⁵

The ethical commonwealth is thus to be distinguished from the civil state in at least four ways. First, its laws derive from the moral law itself, not, as in the civil state, from the sovereignty of the people.

Now if the commonwealth to be established is to be juridical, the mass of people uniting itself into a whole would itself have to be the law-giver (of constitutional laws), because legislation proceeds from the principle of limiting the freedom of each to those conditions under which it can be consistent with the freedom of everyone else according to a common law, and because, as a result, the general will sets up an external legal control. But if the commonwealth is to be ethical, the people, as a people, cannot itself be regarded as the law-giver. For in such a commonwealth all the laws are expressly designed to promote the morality of actions (which is something inner, and hence cannot be subject to public human laws) whereas, in contrast, these public laws--and this would go to constitute a juridical commonwealth--are directed only toward the legality of actions, which meets the eye, and not toward²⁶ (inner) morality, which alone is in question here.

Second, there is a quite striking difference, Kant claims, in the motivation between those who join the ethical commonwealth as compared to those who leave the state of nature to join the civil state. Whereas in the latter case, the motivation is prudential, given the state of nature with

its disparities of natural capacities and its self-interested and self-administered 'law', the individual's chances for survival not to say freedom are significantly increased by entering into the juridical state, in the former instance, however, the motivation is purely ethical, one joins the ethical commonwealth out of respect for the moral law itself since in such a commonwealth 'all the laws are expressly designed to promote the morality of actions (which is something inner...)'....²⁷ Third, this difference in motivation translates into a difference in the character of law and the structure of the society itself. While Kant is careful to emphasize that law structures both the juridical and the ethical state, he nonetheless argues for the difference in the character of the respective laws in precisely the same fashion as he did when earlier discussing the differences between the evil man and the good man. There, it will be recalled, he argued that the evil man's 'actions still may prove to be as much in conformity to the law as if they sprang from true basic principles.'²⁸ The evil agent's actions might thus have the formal character of legality without, in terms of their maxims, conforming to the law's moral demands. The same possibilities exist in the civil state where the law establishes only the legal order, not, except coincidentally the moral order, since it demands nothing more than external compliance and leaves the inner life untouched. In the ethical commonwealth, however, the law's character is entirely moral and inner inasmuch as

it centres entirely on the agent's disposition toward the moral law itself. And this difference in the character of the law makes for a substantial disparity in the structures of the two societies. Ordinary political communities are coercive, though Kant recognizes that their coercion cannot extend to the 'spirits' of their citizens. The ethical commonwealth though, as the perfection of freedom, can be nothing other than a voluntary union to which, though having a duty to join, man can nevertheless not be compelled to enter. Coercion and freedom cannot co-exist.

Every political commonwealth may indeed wish to be possessed of a sovereignty, according to laws of virtue, over the spirits [of its citizens]; for then, when its methods of compulsion do not avail (for the human judge cannot penetrate into the depths of other men) their dispositions to virtue would bring about what was required. But woe to the legislator who wishes to establish through force a polity directed to ethical ends! For in so doing he would not merely achieve the very opposite of an ethical polity but also undermine his political state and make it insecure. The citizen of the political commonwealth remains therefore, so far as its legislative function is concerned, completely free to enter with his fellow-citizens into an ethical union...or to remain in this kind of state of nature, as he may wish.²⁹

But if coercion is absent from the ethical society, this does not mean that freedom has banished lawfulness, for positive freedom is precisely the reconciliation of perfect freedom with perfect respect for law. Though its members are bound by the objectivity and universality of the moral law, the citizens of the ethical commonwealth have freely placed themselves under that law. In this sense of freely choosing the law, and in the further sense that the law liberates one from the constrictions of moral egocentricity,

Kant sees no genuine contradiction between lawfulness and freedom. And it is this convergence of law and freedom, a convergence suggested in the historical works, in the account of persons as ends and in the teleology of the third Critique which makes for the most obvious structural difference between the civil and ethical commonwealths. The most that can be expected in the civil community ordered on the assumptions deriving from the doctrine of persons as final ends is that we accept, that is to say respect the ends of other agents. But in the ethical commonwealth we find ourselves, inasmuch as we have accepted the rigour of the moral law, obligated to do much more. Here we do not simply, through our acceptance of the moral law, judge persons and interests from the standpoint of objectivity, nor do we merely agree to allow our fellow ends to pursue their purposes so long as they allow us to do the same; rather, in this commonwealth of virtue the perversity of radical self-love has been so thoroughly overcome that we accept the interests of others as our own. This does not mean that we accept only those formal interests of others that grow out of our shared respect for the sovereignty of the moral law. Instead, it appears to be a much broader reading of shared subjective interests, something that Kant characterizes as love, in which my fellow end's interests become my interests in the most comprehensive manner.

...Indeed, this understanding of adopting as opposed to merely tolerating the interests of others might in the end be the

most decisive indication of Kant's collectivist leanings that we have.

The differences in the character of law and structure that distinguishes the commonwealth of virtue from the civil society lead to a fourth way in which these two societies might be differentiated, and that is that the ethical commonwealth, though requiring the efforts of human persons, is like the entire process of moral revolution, finally contingent on divine assistance. In part, this theistic connexion is required by the fact that only God, who is able to penetrate into 'the innermost parts of the disposition of each individual',³⁰ can determine who is entitled to membership in the commonwealth of virtue. At the same time, God is required, despite Kant's insistence on the logically independent character of the moral law, as at least in some sense the final guarantor of the moral law and the moral order, a role that is symbolized by his status as law-giver for the ethical commonwealth.

There must therefore be someone other than the populace capable of being specified as the public law-giver for an ethical commonwealth. And yet, ethical laws cannot be thought of as emanating originally merely from the will of this superior being...for then they would not be ethical laws and the duty proper to them would not be the free duty of virtue but the coercive duty of law. Hence only he can be thought of as highest lawgiver of an ethical commonwealth with respect to whom all true duties, hence also the ethical, must be represented as at the same time his commands; he must therefore also be "one who knows the heart," in order to see into the innermost parts of the disposition of each individual and, as is necessary in every commonwealth, to bring it about that each receives whatever his actions are worth. But this is the concept of God as moral ruler of the world. Hence an ethical commonwealth can be thought of only as a people

under divine commands, i.e., as a people of God, and indeed under laws of virtue.³⁴

It is unclear from the above passage how precisely Kant understands God's role with respect to the moral law, since on the one hand he maintains that the moral law cannot originate 'merely from the will' of God though such a law can be 'represented as at the same time his commands....' The key to understanding Kant's meaning might lie in his designation of God as the 'moral ruler of the world', a title which suggests that God does not create the moral law, it does not, as Kant puts it, emanate from His will, but he does adopt and enforce it so that its injunctions, in one sense may be properly described as His commands. This reading is consistent with God's role in the Summum Bonum argument, in which God seems not to create the moral law but merely to bring about, in keeping with its implications, the conjunction of virtue and happiness, and with Kant's characterization here of God as the one who through His ability to perceive the innermost dispositions of persons can 'bring it about that each receives whatever his actions are worth.' God is thus necessary to morality both in the sense of making the abstract character of the moral law tangible and through preventing moral despair through His guarantee of appropriate moral rewards, but not in the sense of being the founder of the moral order, since Kant seems determined to give the moral law a foundational priority which transcends even God.

This understanding, however exegetically neat, seems in the last analysis to be incorrect for it severs God and morality in a manner that is clearly rejected elsewhere in Religion and also in the Opus Postumum. For instance, in the Preface to the first edition of Religion, Kant notes that 'Morality thus leads ineluctably to religion, through which it extends itself to the idea of a powerful moral Lawgiver outside of mankind....'³² God there, is not simply the moral ruler of the world, but the originator of the moral law. Similarly, Kant speaks later of the moral law as the 'will of God' which is 'primordially engraved in our hearts', and in the Opus Postumum he appears (though Kant's meaning here is still subject to much dispute) to suggest that moral experience in general and the moral law in particular is an experience of the divine, a fact which at least hints that morality might not be independent but derive from God's nature. And while Kant believes that the logical priority of foundational assumptions is beyond reason, he nevertheless seems to believe that to accord not simply a foundational priority but an independence to morality is incoherent in light of his own characterizations of God's attributes, characterizations that root the universe in its entirety in God's creative will. Morality is thus foundational to our experience of the world and indeed, perhaps to any rational agent's experience of any conceivable world, but this is not to claim that God merely endorses the moral law: He creates it. And thus the

confidence that persons have in the moral structure of the world is derived not from the fact that God himself adopts the requirements of the moral law, but rather from the fact that He creates these requirements.

Despite this emphasis on God's role of lawmaker, Kant is at pains to maintain, in the interests of freedom of course, the voluntary character of the moral commonwealth. Hence even while representing the law as a series of divine commands, he speaks of the commonwealth of virtue using the metaphor of a household.

An ethical commonwealth, then, in the form of a church, i.e., as a mere representative of a city of God, really has, as regards its basic principles, nothing resembling a political constitution. For its constitution is neither monarchical...nor aristocratic...nor democratic.... It could best of all be likened to that of a household (family) under a common, though invisible, moral Father, whose holy Son, knowing His will and yet standing in blood relation with all members of the household, takes His place in making His will better known to them; these accordingly honor the Father in him and so enter with one another into³³ a voluntary, universal, and enduring union of hearts.

The theistic connexion which marks off the commonwealth of virtue so sharply from the civil state is necessary though not merely in terms of God as lawgiver and judge, but just as crucially with respect to God as source of grace. The organization and perpetuation of the political state might be a product of the combination of Nature and human predispositions, but the founding and indeed the success of the heavenly kingdom on earth is contingent on divine aid. Thus in speaking about man's duty to found and enter the kingdom of virtue, Kant argues that

this duty will require the presupposition of another idea, namely, that of a higher moral Being through whose universal dispensation the forces of separate individuals, insufficient in themselves, are united for a common end.³⁴

In this sense, of course, the ethical commonwealth is linked to Kant's previous discussion about the chances for moral change in that such a kingdom stands alongside of free will, the moral example of Jesus and grace in providing a case for the claim that the sovereignty of even radical evil is contestable. Despite Kant's reluctance to allow for the traditional 'means of grace' of organized religion, the ethical commonwealth might be read as a particular manifestation of the quite pervasive divine assistance that includes but is not exhausted by freedom itself, some historical faiths, and the exemplary lives of those who, like Jesus, defeat evil.

Kant is aware that by resting the success of the ethical commonwealth on supernatural assistance, he risks engendering the very moral passivity that he sees as characteristic of those who in formal religion depend for their salvation not on their own efforts at virtue, but on the mysterious means of grace. Nonetheless, he believes that he can maintain a careful balance between what is required of men and what they might expect from God by developing within his general account of grace--'that grace will effect in us what nature cannot',³⁵--a distinction between God as the author the ethical commonwealth, and also

its final guarantor, and men as its organizational creators, creators who work to actualize God's ethical blueprint.

To found a church as a commonwealth under religious laws seems, however, to call for more wisdom (both of insight and of good disposition) than can well be expected of men, especially since it seems necessary to presuppose the presence in them, for this purpose, of the moral goodness which the establishment of such a church has in view. Actually it is nonsensical to say that men ought to found a kingdom of God (one might as well say of them that they could set up the kingdom of a human monarch); God himself must be the founder of His kingdom. Yet, since we do not know what God may do directly to translate into actuality the idea of His kingdom--and we find within ourselves the moral destiny to become citizens and subjects in this kingdom--and since we do know how we must act to fit ourselves to become members thereof, this idea, whether it was discovered and made public to the human race by reason or by Scripture, will yet obligate us to the establishment of a church whose constitution, in the last analysis, God Himself, as Founder of the kingdom, is the Author, while men, as members and free citizens of this kingdom, are in all cases the creators of the organization.³⁶

The same note is sounded in the earlier discussion of the 'Victory of the Good Over the Evil Principle'.

To found a moral people of God is therefore a task whose consummation can be looked for not from men but only from God Himself. Yet man is not entitled on this account to be idle in this business and to let Providence rule, as though each could apply himself exclusively to his own private moral affairs and relinquish to a higher wisdom all the affairs of the human race (as regards its moral destiny). Rather must man proceed as though everything depended upon him; only on this condition dare he hope that higher wisdom will grant³⁷ the completion of his well-intentioned endeavors.

God founds the moral commonwealth upon the moral law; He calls men to join it as the only way in which to finally defeat radical evil, and He offers them his grace to 'translate into actuality the idea of His kingdom.' Grace, as in all matters relating to radical evil and moral change,

is essential, for without it the entire paradox of the ethical transformation of persons is inexplicable. Only grace, as Kant notes, can finally solve one of the central problems of radical evil and its connexion with human institutions for 'it seems necessary to presuppose the presence in them, for this purpose, of the moral goodness which the establishment of such a church has in view.'

Viewed within the parameters of human understanding, persons quite often do appear to be too radically corrupted by evil to be changed, especially by institutions that themselves are products of the persons they are designed to reform. Only the presupposition of original good as somehow recoverable through the agency of divine grace makes the belief in institutions, even commonwealths of virtue, as reformers of human character, believable.

For all of his emphasis on grace, however, Kant is nevertheless as anxious to specify, at least in principle, what men must do to 'translate into actuality the idea of His kingdom.' The key to understanding the place of human responsibility in the ethical commonwealth is to be found in Kant's claims (1) that persons do know how they must act to 'fit' themselves to become members of the commonwealth of virtue, (2) that such a commonwealth is to be conceived of as a church, and (3) that men must act as if they alone were responsible for the success of such an enterprise. (1)

Despite the radical nature of evil, men are yet aware of their duty, both to themselves, others and of 'the human

race toward itself,'³⁸ to forsake the ethical state of nature and enter the kingdom of virtue. Moreover, they are also cognizant that membership in this ethical society entails an acknowledgement of their capacities for self-deceit and a reordering of their foundational moral maxims such that self-love is made subservient to the objectivity of the moral law.

(2) Closely tied to the character of the candidates for admission to the ethical commonwealth is quite naturally the character of the commonwealth itself. Kant repeatedly refers to the it as having the form of a church, though he is careful to emphasize that the type of church that he has in mind has none of the narrowness of doctrine, belief and practice that is usually associated with institutionalized religion. For instance, the ethical commonwealth as a church distinguishes itself from the 'concept of a political commonwealth,'³⁹ in the sense that it extends itself universally to all of mankind, though given the pre-requisites of membership this universality is more potential than real. Indeed, as Kant himself notes, though most men are members of a civil society, few will choose to unite with the ethical kingdom of virtue. 'The idea of such a state possesses a thoroughly well-grounded objective reality in human reason (in man's duty to join such a state) even though...we can never hope that man's good will lead mankind to decide to work with unanimity towards this goal.'⁴⁰

The universality of the ethical commonwealth as church derives not merely from the extent of its potential membership, however, but from its connexion with what Kant calls the 'Pure religious faith'⁴¹, a faith that 'is concerned only with what constitutes the essence of reverence for God, namely, obedience, ensuing from the moral disposition, to all duties as His commands....'⁴² This 'pure religious faith' is distinguished from what Kant refers to as ecclesiastical faiths which are founded on particular historical revelations. Though necessary at all times for some, perhaps most people, Kant sees the particularity of ecclesiastical faiths as something that should in time give way to the universality of the 'pure religious faith' which rests on the moral law, conceived of course as founded by God, as the sole foundation of the moral and the religious life. Though under no illusions about the ease with which this transition will occur, Kant is yet certain, subject to the normal hedges on any certainty arising from human freedom, that it will occur and with it the sovereignty of the ethical commonwealth. This confidence flows in part from what he refers to as the 'physical and the moral predisposition' in us, but also from his confidence in Providence.

Hence a necessary consequence of the physical and, at the same time, the moral predisposition in us, the latter being the basis and the interpreter of all religion, is that in the end religion will gradually be free from all empirical determining grounds and from all statues which rest on history and which through the agency of ecclesiastical faith provisionally unite men for the requirements of the good; and thus at last the

pure religion of reason will rule over all, "so that God may be all in all." The integuments within which the embryo first developed into a human being must be laid aside when he is to come into the light of day. The leading-string of holy tradition with its appendages of statutes and observances, which in its time did good service, becomes bit by bit dispensable, yea, finally when man enters upon his adolescence, it becomes a fetter. While he (the human race) "was a child he understood as a child" and managed to combine a certain amount of erudition, and even philosophy ministering to the church, with the propositions which were bestowed on him without his cooperation: "But when he becomes a man he puts away childish things." The humiliating distinction between laity and clergy disappears, and equality arises from true freedom, yet without anarchy, because, though each obeys the...law which he prescribes to himself, he must at the same time regard this law as the will of a World-Ruler revealed to him through reason, a will which by invisible means unites all under one common government into one state--a state previously and inadequately represented and prepared for by the visible church. All this is not to be expected from an external revolution, because such an upheaval produces its effect tempestuously and violently, an effect, quite dependent on circumstances.... The basis for the transition to that new order of affairs must lie in the principle that the true religion of reason is a continually occurring divine...revelation for all men. Once this basis has been grasped with mature reflection, it is carried into effect, so far as this is destined to be₄₃ a human task, through gradually advancing reform.

Kant is prepared to acknowledge, then, the difficulty that such a faith and such a church face, but despite the merely gradual reform of existing ideas and institutions, the idea, which now perhaps is nothing more than a 'seed', will in time fertilize the whole.

We have good reason to say, however, that "the kingdom of God is come unto us" once the principle of the gradual transition of ecclesiastical faith to the universal religion of reason, and so to a (divine) ethical state on earth, has become general and has also gained somewhere a public foothold, even though the actual establishment of this state is still infinitely removed from us. For since this principle contains the basis for a continual approach towards such a

consummation, there lies in it...as in a seed which is self-developing and in due time self-fertilizing, the whole,⁴⁴ which one day is to illumine and to rule the world.

The churchly character of the commonwealth of virtue points finally though, in one other direction, and that is to the transcendental, to the ideal, perhaps even to the mystical nature of the ethical society itself. The ethical commonwealth as a church is at best a transcental Idea, not an object of possible experience.

An ethical commonwealth under divine moral legislation is a church, so far as it is not an object of possible experience, is called the church invisible (a mere idea of the union of all the righteous under direct and moral divine world-government, an idea serving all as the archetype of what is to be established by men). The visible church is the actual union of men into a whole which harmonizes with that ideal.... The true (visible) church is that which exhibits the (moral) kingdom of God⁴⁵ on earth so far as it can be brought to pass by men.

The reasons for Kant's insistence on the transcendental status of the moral commonwealth are not entirely clear, though the claim may be nothing more than a causal suggestion since it is not repeated elsewhere. The introduction of yet another Idea is, however, perhaps more understandable in the light of (3) above where it was asserted that men must act as if they bore the entire responsibility for the success of the commonwealth of virtue. Kant clearly wishes to avoid not simply the moral despair that would exist if men believed that none of their attempts at moral reform counted, but also the disinclination to moral effort that would follow from the belief that God's grace alone would secure the

transformation of persons. Hence the Idea of the ethical commonwealth which the church founded on pure religious faith will approximate allows men their role in moral change while at the same time placing the final responsibility for such change--that is the ultimate realization of the ethical commonwealth--with God. This need not suggest that the moral commonwealth is finally heavenly, since Kant appears to believe that it is not the venue but the moral abilities of men that renders transcendental assistance necessary. While rooting Kant's argument for the transcendental character of the commonwealth of virtue in his general insistence about human moral responsibility provides a plausible explanation for an otherwise puzzling manoeuvre, there is another explanation that might work equally well. Kant might, in light of his consistent claims about the inscrutability of man's moral character, have realized that the human persons who were to compose such a commonwealth could never be certain about the interior dispositions of anyone other than themselves, and thus they could not know whether such a commonwealth, dependent as it was on a good will, had in fact come into existence. In this way, the moral society could not be 'an object of possible experience' and would, in fact, be 'unnoted by human eyes but ever continuing....',⁴⁶

But to speak of the ethical commonwealth in this fashion, as an Idea that is not an object of possible experience, seems to call into question the very task that

such a moral union was intended to perform, namely, the defeat of evil. Is it, in fact, still reasonable to assume that the ethical community can succeed? Kant, who perhaps has no genuine conceptual basis for his assurance, is nevertheless convinced that it can. Only the timetable is in doubt. 'Such, therefore, is the activity of the good principle, unnoted by human eyes but ever continuing-erecting for itself in the human race, regarded as a commonwealth under laws of virtue, a power and a kingdom, which sustains the victory over evil and, under its own dominion, assures the world of an eternal peace.'⁴⁷ But what is the source of this kingdom's power? How does it encourage moral reform? Kant himself asks this question, but fails to answer it except indirectly. Part of the answer is to be found in the strength of virtue itself, a fact of the moral life that Kant never ceases to extol. For instance, in the concluding section of Religion, he draws a distinction between what he terms the doctrine of godliness and the doctrine of virtue. Part of the superiority of the doctrine of virtue stems from the fact that it derives from the 'soul of man'.

The doctrine of virtue, in contrast, derives from the soul of man. He is already in full possession of it, undeveloped, no doubt, but not needing, like the religious concept, to be rationalized into being by means of logistics. In the purity of this concept of virtue, in the awakening of consciousness to a capacity which otherwise we would never surmise (a capacity of becoming able to master the greatest obstacles within ourselves), in the dignity of humanity which man must respect in his own person and human destiny...in all this there is something which so exalts the soul, and so leads it to the very Deity....⁴⁸

The doctrine of virtue, while a component of the ethical commonwealth's power is, however, not its unique contribution. For this, we must look not to those capacities which individuals possess so much as the social support that a society of virtue might provide for the actualization of such capacities. Part of the ethical commonwealth's social power for the good is found in the fact that it allows the initial adoption of moral maxims to become an established fact by separating the newly virtuous from the assault of radical evil via the corrupting influence of other persons. In this sense, the commonwealth of virtue provides the context in which one might be 'assiduous in preserving' one's new-found freedom from evil safe 'from all impure admixture and in registering it deeply in our disposition to be convinced, by its gradual effect upon the spiritual nature, that the dreaded powers of evil can in no wise make headway against it....'⁴⁹ In effect, the ethical commonwealth allows one the security and time to strengthen one's newly-made commitment to the sovereignty of the good. And if evil is at least in some measure derived from the mutually corrupting powers of one's fellows, this ethical isolation is no small triumph. There is, however, something more that this society of virtue attempts, something that provides substantial evidence in favour of Kant's belief in the social making of the good will. In addition to removing those who have newly altered their foundational moral maxims from the company of those who have

not, the ethical commonwealth provides as well an on-going form of collective re-inforcement for virtue in the sense that it is its 'task and duty...rationally to impress these laws in all their scope upon the entire human race.'⁵⁰ Though this points, in one sense, to the educative feature of the society, it also suggests that in its collective commitment to the moral law, it provides a vital feature in the campaign to prevent the resurgence of evil, namely, a community acutely aware of the subtlety of self-deception with respect to one's intentions and thus, at least in theory, better able to detect it in oneself and others. These two features of the ethical society remind one, of course, both of the fact that it is primarily intended as a means of securing, not initiating, moral reform, though its commitment to virtue might indeed encourage the latter, and that the sovereignty of the good seems much more fragile than the dominion of radical evil. Unfortunately, the nature of both good and evil appears to require more than the personal resources of moral reform available to any particular individual.

III

From what we have argued above, it is clear that Kant believes that the perfection of freedom that is man's final end is possible only as he becomes a part of an ethical

community conceived of and finally secured by God. That Kant's anthropology and also his politics should culminate in such a theistic vein is at once surprising and expected. It is surprising in light of Kant's professed opposition to traditional metaphysics and its proofs of God's existence and nature, his doubts, or at least reservations, about many orthodox Christian dogmas and his apparent unwillingness to ground the character of persons, for instance, in the argument for man as end, on God's nature, and his frequent exaltation of the moral law over conventional religion. It is expected not simply because of the ambiguous character of his anthropology, though this should alert one to the possibility of conceptual surprises, but because throughout his account of persons, whether in his willingness to reconcile philosophical and Scriptural accounts of man's origins, or in his account of the role of Providence in man's historical development, or in his quite explicit teleological conception of Nature and Nature's end with respect to human purposes, or even in his willingness to make room for grace in man's moral redemption, Kant provides a variety of implicit and occasionally quite explicit indications of what his foundational beliefs really are. As Goethe notes in speaking of Kant's ambiguity, it is almost as if Kant has 'woven a certain element of sly irony into his method. For, while at one time he seemed to be bent on limiting our faculties of knowledge in the narrowest way, at

another time, he pointed, as it were with a side gesture, beyond the limits which he himself had drawn.⁵¹

This does not mean either that Kant is a conventional Christian theist or that the deist interpretations of him are uniformly wrong. His position on matters theological, like his position on the comparative roles of freedom and grace, and the heavenly and earthly kingdoms in man's ethical re-making, resists such easy classification. Kant, to be sure, does limit knowledge in order to make room for faith, a move that appears to place him in the camp of traditional theism, but even as he limits knowledge, he does not exclude reason from the role of adjudicating religious belief, a manoeuvre that appears to open the door to deism. Though one might, with some justification speak of him as either a theist with deist leanings or a deist with theistic sympathies, there is at least one central element of his thought, to wit, his anthropology, which seems to justify seeing him as much more of a theist, though an unconventional theist, than as a deist. Whatever Kant's early beliefs about persons, and even his early works can without injustice be read in a theistic manner, his mature understanding of them which is centred on the problem of radical evil is fundamentally theistic in its commitment to a grace which lies beyond reason and that quite confounds human expectations and yet supplements our ill-fated efforts at change. And grace is simply not a component of deist theology. For all of his talk of a 'pure rational faith'

and his rejection of religious ritual, Kant's religious beliefs in the end do rest not on reason but on faith, a faith that however much fully and finally transcends human understanding is yet curiously demanded by reason itself. Reason's role is thus to limit its own presumptions, to discredit, in a thoroughly deist fashion, the pretensions of a historical dogma masquerading as infallible truth. Reason then sets the standards and the parameters of faith, but in doing so, it does not eliminate faith. One might with, for instance Kierkegaard, question the soundness, the legitimacy of this strategy, but one cannot in fairness call it deist.

Finally, Kant's consistent respect for Jesus, his defense of him against Reimarus, his characterization of him as the Son of God, his description of his own work as an attempt to 'interpret Christ's work',⁵² and his characterization of his ethical community as a church, a church which while devoid of ecclesiastical structure and saving ritual, nonetheless offers the same haven from evil and encouragement to good that Kant found in the Pietist community of his youth, all provide substantial evidence in favour of a highly original, and perhaps thereby unconventional, but yet fundamentally theistic perspective.

In the end, then, freedom and through freedom, persons, are 'saved', not merely through personal decisions, though these are certainly required, but through the profoundly social mechanism of an ethical union which owes its existence as much to God's grace as to human effort. Kant's

anthropology with its vision of persons as free, that is to say rational and moral, thus leads to a particular vision of the political life, though at the same time it points beyond the institutional contours of the liberal state to a conception of persons living together under the dominion of virtue alone. While at one level there is a certain dualism in Kant's view of the communal life of persons, a dualism reflected in the simultaneous existence of both the political and the ethical commonwealths, the political, though at least initially foundational for the ethical, is, if the ethical is successful, finally unnecessary. In this sense, the goal of the ethical is to render the political commonwealth, at least in its coercive aspect, though not, perhaps, in its end-setting capacity, redundant. This trans-political dimension of social existence is nonetheless intimately connected to the civil state first in that the 'juridico-civil state' distinguished as it is from the state of nature suggests to persons the distinction between the ethical state of nature and the state of virtue, a distinction necessary for the ethical commonwealth, and second in that the political state's structure that aims toward the freedom of law and objectivity, though not precisely equivalent to the moral law, nevertheless provides a model of what the ethical community ought to be. As Kant himself notes in speaking of the relationship between the political commonwealth and the commonwealth of virtue, 'It can exist in the midst of a political commonwealth and may

even be made up of all its members; (indeed, unless it is based upon such a commonwealth it can never be brought into existence by man).'⁵³

The connexion, however, is not merely one way, but rather quite genuinely reciprocal in that the members of the ethical commonwealth in committing themselves to the objectivity and the freedom of the moral law thereby increase the chances of genuine freedom in political society itself. To the extent that a civil society is composed of persons who are simultaneously members of the community of virtue, the purposes of that civil society are more easily realized. In this sense the members of Kant's ethical commonwealth 'leaven' the political order through their modelling of not merely civic virtue, but virtue in itself, functioning as more democratic and less elitist counterparts of Plato's philosopher-kings.

This connexion of the ethical commonwealth and Plato's ideal political order is more than the merely casual though, for a surprisingly similar notion of Idea structures both. On one level, Kant's ethical commonwealth is the Idea to which the political state obtains but shadowy approximation. Given the constraints of a radically corrupted human character, the effects of such an ideal on the realities of political life are at best uncertain. On another level, however, the Idea of the ethical commonwealth as the realized Kingdom of God serves as the ideal to which the actual ethical commonwealth, the earthly kingdom of God,

strives. Here too, despite the assurances of divine grace, the outcome is uncertain, though Kant, unlike Plato, seems to at least in principle allow for an 'earthly' realization of the transcendent. At the last for Kant, as for Plato, the conjunction of the ideal and the real is mediated through a hierarchal series of Ideas which structure and regulate the normative: the actual political order and the ideal political order, the ideal political order and the actual ethical commonwealth, and the actual ethical commonwealth and the ideal ethical commonwealth.

The character of persons thus in one sense demands not merely the political but also the ethical commonwealth, and the ethical commonwealth in turn demands God. In this fashion, the society of virtue is another version of the moral argument for the existence of God in that our moral hopes for persons, hopes without which the moral enterprise and with it all moral experience is incoherent, demand the ultimate moral perfectibility of persons, something that is possible only within the ethical commonwealth brought about by God. In this version, however, both happiness and immortality appear to be absent, having been replaced by virtue and the immanent Kingdom of God.

None of this, neither the anthropology as a whole nor its particular implications for the political and ethical life of persons, is without its difficulties. Undergirding the entire conceptual framework is an inadequately supported teleology of nature that is never clearly linked to a

teleology of persons. Indeed, the arguments that attempt to make sense of persons, whether as Nature's ends, as ends in themselves, or the free determiners of their own purposes, are never connected with their obviously theistic assumptions, and thus lose much of their genuinely foundational character. Moreover, the ethical commonwealth, even allowing for its coherence, both as Idea and as actuality, seems an exceptionally vague, fragile and ultimately uncertain instrument for affecting such a delicate yet crucial transformation of human persons. And as for persons, even with the commonwealth of virtue, persons throughout all of this appear to be so deeply caught up in evil, that Kant's hopes for their rational, moral and free characters seem ridiculously exaggerated. Finally, even freedom, that central component not simply of Kant's anthropology but of his conception of God as well, appears consistently exposed in that its foundational status, while earning it much praise, seldom merits it a compelling argument. Indeed, even the claim, perhaps in the end Kant's most important, that freedom and objectivity are conceptually joined in that only as we view the world from the most general and non self-interested vantage point do we experience genuine freedom, receives only scanty argument.

Many, if not all, of these difficulties would be considerably diminished if Kant had adopted the less ambiguous and more straightforward views that are generally ascribed to him. But what makes him both so fascinating and

so intellectually fruitful (and often frustrating) is both his refusal to succumb to tidy conceptual formulas and his insistence, despite its perhaps finally unsatisfying character, on what we have called his anthropology of ambiguity. Without such a conception of persons, which beginning with a commitment to both Nature and Freedom, consistently charts a course which falls between a variety of traditions and positions--Nature and grace, history in its classical sense as rationally explicable patterns of growth and decay and history in its Christian guise as the process of salvation, the earthly city and the heavenly city as contrasting modes of that salvation, conservatism and liberalism as norms for the political life, optimism and pessimism with respect to the prospects for moral change--most of Kant's positions would be much clearer, but this gain in clarity might quite conceivably be at the expense of truth. In the end, one must, Kant suggests, with persons and perhaps with everything else, settle for what viewed in one way is freedom's ambiguity, but seen in another fashion in really freedom's final clarity.

This perfect state may never,...come into being; none the less this does not affect the rightfulness of the idea, which, in order to bring the legal organization of mankind ever nearer to its greatest possible perfection, advances this maximum as an archetype. For what the highest degree may be at which mankind may have to come to a stand, and how great a gulf may still have to be left between the idea and its realization, are questions which no one can, or ought to, answer. For the issue depends on freedom; and it is in the power of freedom to pass beyond any and every specified limit.⁵⁴

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