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Kantian Ethics and Socialism

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HARRY VAN DER LINDEN

**Kantian Ethics
and Socialism**

Kantian Ethics and Socialism

Awarded the 1985 Johnsonian Prize
in Philosophy

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HARRY VAN DER LINDEN

**Kantian Ethics
and Socialism**

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To Anne

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CONTENTS

Preface	vii
Note on References	xii

Part One Kant's Highest Good as a Social Duty

Chapter I	Social Versus Private Ethics: The Highest Good and the Categorical Imperative	3
	1. <i>Social Ethics</i>	6
	2. <i>Private Ethics</i>	13
	3. <i>The Highest Good and the Categorical Imperative</i>	18
	4. <i>The Highest Good and Individual Duties</i>	38
Chapter II	Moral Commitment and the Limits of Human Action	42
	1. <i>Moral Feelings in the Context of Social Ethics</i>	43
	2. <i>The Antinomy of Practical Reason</i>	65
	3. <i>Moral Faith and Hope</i>	86
Chapter III	The Philosophy of History (A): Hope and the Morality of the Idea of Progress	91
	1. <i>Hope for Progress and Its Relevance for Social Action</i>	92
	2. <i>A Commentary on "Universal History"</i>	99
	3. <i>Morality and the Idea of Progress: An Alleged Inconsistency</i>	116

Chapter IV	The Philosophy of History (B): The Cunning of Nature, the Highest Political Good, and the Moral Society	134
	1. <i>"Critique of Judgment": The Ultimate End of Nature and the Final End of Creation</i>	135
	2. <i>The Cunning of Nature and the Society of Intelligent Devils</i>	142
	3. <i>The Highest Political Good and the Highest Moral Good: Systematic Analysis and Critique</i>	153
Chapter V	The Philosophy of History (C): Moral Progress and Revolution	165
	1. <i>The French Revolution as a Sign of Moral Progress</i>	166
	2. <i>The Right to Revolution and Resistance</i>	175
	3. <i>Summary and Present Perspective</i>	187
 Part Two Kantian Socialist Ethics and the Problem of Morality in Marx 		
Chapter VI	Hermann Cohen: From Social Ethics to Socialist Ethics	197
	1. <i>Kant, the Republican Ideal, and Capitalism</i>	198
	2. <i>The Basic Premises of Cohen's Practical Philosophy</i>	205
	3. <i>The Cooperative and Worker-control Socialism</i>	221
Chapter VII	Marx and Morality: A Kantian Analysis and Critique	240
	1. <i>Kantian Socialist Ethics and Marx: Evaluative Similarities and Differences</i>	241
	2. <i>On the Role of Morality for Social Action (A): The Hegelian Elements in Marx</i>	255
	3. <i>On the Role of Morality for Social Action (B): The Kantian Elements in Marx</i>	272
	4. <i>Summary and Conclusion</i>	288
Appendix: A	Historical Note on Kantian Ethical Socialism	291
Notes		309
Works Cited		349
Index		361

PREFACE

Around the turn of the century the neo-Kantian socialist Hermann Cohen wrote in his Introduction and Critical Epilogue to Friedrich Albert Lange's *History of Materialism* that Kant "is the true and real originator of German socialism."¹ His claim, of course, is not to be taken too literally. After all, Kant to a large extent defended the minimal state and accepted the emerging capitalist market economy, whereas socialists have typically rejected both. Rather, the point of Cohen's challenging statement is that Kant's practical philosophy contains moral and philosophical-historical insights crucial to socialist thought and that his notion of the highest good, or moral society of colegislators who seek to enhance one another's ends, can be extrapolated to set forth the demand for the socialist ideal. Thus the statement suggests a conception of socialism that is ethical in nature and involves not a mere denial of liberal thought but rather its critical extension in the form of economic democracy. A final aspect of Cohen's claim which needs to be stressed is its implicit criticism of Marx on the grounds that a morally defensible socialism is an ethical socialism and that the philosophical foundations of a tenable socialism are to be sought in Kant, not in Hegel.

These issues are the focus of the present study. In Part One, I offer a critical reconstruction of the central role in Kant's work of the duty to promote the highest good as a social duty, arguing that this duty is to be interpreted as comprising the moral requirement that we seek the republican state and international peace. Thus I place politics, history, social conflict, and the moral commitment to change society at the core of Kant's practical philosophy, attempting to undercut the view of his ethics as primarily concerned with the struggle between individual duty and inclination. Although my reconstruction in its basic orientation is influenced by Cohen and the Kant interpretation of the Marburg School in general, I present a new systematic examination of the social dimension in

Kant's practical philosophy, taking into account much current literature on or relevant to this topic. It is my hope that this reconstruction will be judged not only in terms of its possible significance for socialist thought but also in terms of its discussion of elements of Kant's practical philosophy which presently receive insufficient philosophical attention.

In Part Two, I turn to Cohen's transformation of Kant's ethics into a socialist ethics. My discussion aims to show that Cohen's social and moral thought has been unjustly neglected ever since it was effectively repressed by the wave of racist and fascist philosophy in the 1920s and '30s in Germany. I examine his practical work in some detail, emphasizing his idea that the socialist society of producer cooperatives instantiates, or best approximates, the moral ideal of the community of legislators. My study ends by offering an extensive Kantian analysis and critique of Marx's view of morality, concluding that Marxist thought can greatly profit from making Kantian ethics its moral foundation. In a word, I argue that this is a tenable enterprise, because Marx and Kantian socialist ethics share a common basic evaluative outlook, and a much needed enterprise because, much to the damage of the socialist cause, Marx denied that action toward the socialist ideal must be a *moral* praxis. Here again my approach is not historical; the major exception to this is my discussion of Cohen's perceptive critique of Marx's materialist conception of history. My main reason for taking this approach is that the Kantian socialists and their critics at the time were unfamiliar with a large part of the Marxian corpus, such as the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844. I have added, however, an appendix with a historical note on Kantian ethical socialism, in the expectation that this may contribute to a better understanding of some of the philosophical and political concerns expressed in the text.

That the duty to promote the highest good is to be understood as a social duty is also argued by Yirmiahu Yovel in his *Kant and the Philosophy of History*. Notwithstanding some essential interpretative disagreements, my study is greatly indebted to his work. Our objectives, however, are quite different. Yovel's main purpose is to elucidate history as a fundamental category in Kant's critical system as a whole, whereas my primary aim (in Part One) is not only to expose but also to assess critically and develop further the ramifications of Kant's idea that the highest good sets a moral task for humanity. Thus I do not hesitate to make explicit what is merely implicit in Kant's practical writings, adding my own arguments where necessary, and even to traverse roads he hinted at but never

took. An example of the former is my argument that the duty to promote the highest good can be derived from the different formulations of the categorical imperative. An example of the latter is my discussion of a variety of moral problems that arise from Kant's turn to the idea of historical progress for the sake of praxis aimed at the highest good, such as the question whether we can uphold the dignity experienced in the fulfillment of our social duties once we realize that future generations may hold that our efforts fell short of the ideal because they may have a different conception of the demands of the moral law. To give one more illustration, I argue that although Kant's notion of respect for the moral law does not capture the emotive components of the moral commitment (the "good will") to change society, it is nonetheless the case that his theory of moral feeling offers an adequate conceptual apparatus for examining some emotive elements of this type of commitment which are mentioned but not analyzed in his historical writings, such as moral indignation about present social conditions and moral enthusiasm engendered by progressive political events. These examples, it may be noted, underline the reconstructive nature of my Kant discussion and also illustrate that Kant's ethics is important for ethical socialism as a philosophy of praxis.

In the course of this discussion I occasionally criticize some aspects of other Kant interpretations. These criticisms take on two basic forms that should not be confused: strong and weak claims. A *strong* claim in this context is the contention that a certain author misinterprets what I consider to be Kant's view. The point of my strong claims is, of course, to raise interesting problems and questions for my own reconstruction. A *weak* claim is here to be understood as an argument that a certain author fails to recognize that the Kantian text contains another *relevant* reading besides the one he or she in fact offers. It goes without saying that my choice to elaborate precisely this other possible reading reflects my purpose of developing Kant's practical philosophy as a crucial step toward an adequate Kantian socialist ethics. This raises the following question: Why did Kant not take the direction that I, all things considered, think he should have taken? Or, to put the matter more bluntly, why did Kant not become an ethical socialist, not in word but in spirit? In addressing the reasons for his different philosophical and political orientation I use in effect the same kind of distinctions and selection criteria that guide my criticisms of various Kant interpretations. Thus I argue, for instance, that Kant's nearly total rejection of all forms of political resistance is inconsistent on his own terms (a strong claim), and I maintain that the

basic premises of his doctrine of the highest good do not necessitate his view that the moral society itself cannot be institutionally expressed and must be seen as an "inner" unification of good wills (a weak claim). Both strong and weak claims play, moreover, a role in my discussion of his commitment to the minimal state and capitalist economy. And again, the scope and intent of my criticisms is ultimately circumscribed by my over-all aim of constructing a viable Kantian socialist ethics.

My final preliminary comment concerns my argument throughout this study that morality, with its motivational, corrective (placing moral constraints upon social action), and directive (steering this action toward proper ideals) functions, is a *sine qua non* for a defensible socialist theory and praxis. This argument must not be equated, as many Marxists tend to do, with some kind of voluntaristic plea, whistling democratic socialism in the capitalist darkness. Mediation is important, as I stress at several points in the text, and the question must be addressed how under the present social and political circumstances socialist values can be promoted and realized. The primary task of a philosophical study, however, is to raise the question, not to answer it.

* * * *

This study owes more to my teacher and friend Steven S. Schwarzschild than I have been able to express in my notes to his work. He initiated my interest in Kantian socialism, strongly influenced my Kant interpretation, and gave his expertise and commitment to the execution and completion of this study. I would like to express my deep gratitude for his generous assistance. I would also like to thank Edward F. McClennen, whose incisive comments contributed to improving the first chapter. Sidney Morgenbesser and Thomas W. Pogge were so kind as to send literature relevant to my study, and their perceptive comments and suggestions were very helpful in writing its final version. My discussions with Daniel E. Wueste were a stimulus to sharpening my own Kantian viewpoint. Thanks also go to my parents, as well as to Rita Adler, Robert B. Barrett, Scott Bodfish, Claude J. Evans, Stanley L. Paulson, and Carl P. Wellman for their encouraging words and various other forms of support.

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Harry van der Linden

Hamilton, New York
August 1987

NOTE ON REFERENCES

Most references to Kant's works are made in abbreviated form, to their English translations. In general, references to his works are followed by the corresponding volume and page numbers from *Immanuel Kants Werke*, edited by Ernst Cassirer, and published by Bruno Cassirer, Berlin (1912–22). Single references are given if either no current translation is available or a translated work of Kant is not included in the Cassirer edition. In the case of *Critique of Judgment*, paragraph numbers are also provided. No changes have been made in the translations except where it is so stated.

Abbreviated references to the works of Hermann Cohen are limited to the two of his writings that are most significant for my study. All passages cited in the text and notes from his nontranslated works are my translations unless noted otherwise.

Listed below are the abbreviations of the works of Kant and Cohen as employed in the text and notes. All their other cited works can be found in *Works Cited*.

Abbreviations

IMMANUEL KANT

<i>Anthropology</i>	<i>Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View</i> , translated by Mary J. Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974). Cassirer edition: Volume VIII.
<i>Judgment</i>	<i>Critique of Judgment</i> , translated by J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1951). Cassirer edition: Volume V.
<i>Practical Reason</i>	<i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> , translated by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956). Cassirer edition: Volume V.
<i>Pure Reason</i>	<i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> , translated by Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965). Cassirer edition: Volume III.

- Virtue* *The Doctrine of Virtue*, translated by Mary J. Gregor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964). Translation of Part II of *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Cassirer edition: Volume VII.
- Foundations* *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959). Cassirer edition: Volume IV.
- Justice* *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*, translated by John Ladd (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965). Incomplete translation of Part I of *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Cassirer edition: Volume VII.
- On the Old Saw* *On the Old Saw: That May Be Right in Theory but It Won't Work in Practice*, translated by E. B. Ashton (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974). Cassirer edition: Volume VI.
- Peace* *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, translated by Lewis White Beck in Kant, *On History*, edited by Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963). Beck fails to mention the subtitle. Cassirer edition: Volume VI.
- Religion* *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (New York: Harper & Row, 1960). Cassirer edition: Volume VI.
- "An Old Question" "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?", translated by Robert E. Anchor in Kant, *On History*. Part II of *The Strife of the Faculties*. Cassirer edition: Volume VII.
- "Conjectural Beginning" "Conjectural Beginning of Human History," translated by Emil L. Fackenheim in Kant, *On History*. Cassirer edition: Volume IV.
- "Universal History" "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," translated by Lewis White Beck in Kant, *On History*. Cassirer edition: Volume IV.

HERMANN COHEN

Pure Will

Ethik des reinen Willens (Ethics of the Pure Will), reprinted in Cohen, *Werke*, Volume VII, Part II, edited by Hermann Cohen Archives at the University of Zurich, published by Georg Olms Verlag (Hildesheim/New York, 1981). Reprinted from the 2nd edition (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1907). The first edition appeared in 1904.

"Critical Epilogue"

"Einleitung mit kritischem Nachtrag zu Langes *Geschichte des Materialismus*" ("Introduction and Critical Epilogue to Lange's *History of Materialism*"), in Cohen, *Schriften zur Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte*, Volume II, edited by Albert Görland and Ernst Cassirer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1928). Reprinted from the 9th edition of Friedrich Albert Lange's *History of Materialism* (1914).

PART ONE

Kant's Highest Good as a Social Duty

CHAPTER I

Social Versus Private Ethics: The Highest Good and the Categorical Imperative

In his critical writings Kant frequently states that it is our duty to promote the highest good, or *summum bonum*. In *Critique of Judgment*, for example, he writes: "The moral law . . . determines for us . . . a final purpose toward which it obliges us to strive, and this purpose is the *highest good in the world* possible through freedom" (p. 301; § 87; V: 531). Kant elaborates: "We are *a priori* determined by reason to promote with all our powers the *summum bonum* (*Weltbeste*), which consists in the combination of the greatest welfare of rational beings with the highest condition of the good in itself, i.e., in universal happiness conjoined with morality most accordant to law" (p. 304; § 88; 534).

At the outset, this claim raises a variety of interrelated questions: What is the moral foundation of the demand that we ought to seek a moral society? What are the implications of this moral requirement for the understanding of our individual duties? What motivational account can be given of the fulfillment of the duty to promote the highest good? What are the moral constraints that must be placed upon such an endeavor? Does the moral ideal specify a tenable human project, both from the perspective of history and from that of the laws of nature? And, finally, what are the institutions that are most fitting to, or best express, the moral

ideal? The first part of this study seeks to reconstruct critically how these questions, as aspects or ramifications of the highest good as a social duty, are addressed in Kant's work. The rationale and guideline of my reconstruction are discussed in the Preface: to develop Kant's practical philosophy as an essential step toward my over-all aim of constructing a Kantian socialist ethics.

A problem that needs our immediate attention is that there is a certain ambiguity embedded in Kant's notion of the highest good. Is it his view that we must *promote* or further the highest good, or does he hold that it is the duty of humanity to *realize* this good? Kant usually says that it is our duty to promote the highest good, arguing that it is not within our power to so transform nature that each individual will be happy in the moral society. Thus one would expect him to argue additionally that the highest good as the final end set by the moral law is a moral society in which human beings attempt to make one another happy, but do not necessarily succeed. Kant, however, does not explicitly draw this conclusion. The two conceptions of the highest good are conflated in his work, and the notion of the highest good as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness predominates. Thus it would seem that Kant holds that the failure to realize universal happiness is a deontic failing. I will touch upon this problem at some other points in this chapter, and in the next chapter it will be a focus of my attention. Unless noted otherwise, in the present chapter I interpret the highest good as a moral society in which human agents seek to make one another happy, leaving it an open question to what extent this universal cooperation leads to universal happiness. The upshot, then, is that I change somewhat Kant's common definition of the highest good, but preserve the meaning of his claim that we must promote the highest good (as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness).

I will call any moral theory, such as Kant's ethics, that puts forward the demand that we *actively* seek the realization of ideal institutions a *social ethics*, and I will use the term *private ethics* as the opposite term. The point of using the latter term is to signify that any moral theory that fails to make such a social demand leaves our moral initiatives and efforts limited in effect to the private realm. This does not mean that the moral agent of private ethics does not participate in institutions and does not fulfill duties imposed upon him by these institutions; rather, it means that this agent fails to question morally these duties and to see it as his task to support just institutions or change unjust institutions in light of some moral ideal. In short, private ethics (implicitly) limits our

duties to individual duties and passive, as distinguished from active, social duties. I use here, and will continue to use, the terms 'individual duties' and 'social duties' in their common meanings; their distinction hinges on the type of ends pursued, the ends of particular individuals or social (institutional, collective) ends. Further, for the sake of brevity, from now on, when I speak of "social duties," I mean active social duties.

My working definition of social ethics should not be interpreted too narrowly. There are numerous ways in which we can fulfill our social duties and contribute toward the realization of ideal institutions, besides political action aimed at these ends. Kant's own work, as we will see, offers illustrations as diverse as engaging in educational reform and writing a philosophical reconstruction of history that seeks to ground hope for progress as conducive to moral praxis toward the highest good. Social duties can, moreover, be directed toward the private realm. The attempt to overcome individual bias toward minority groups may serve here as an example, assuming that its final end in view is to come to a nondiscriminatory society. In general, my working definition of social ethics leaves room for social duties directed toward a variety of intermediate social goals, but, in accordance with Kant's view, it seeks to make clear that a rational pursuit of such goals presupposes some larger directive framework in the form of ideal institutions.

In the first section of this chapter I will begin to spell out the role in Kant's work of the highest good as a social duty, arguing that this duty integrates the diverse branches of the practical system and that it makes his ethics a social ethics, because it comprises such social duties as seeking the perfect state (the republican state) and peace between the nations. In the second section I will point out that, although there are some reasons for interpreting Kant's ethics as a private ethics, it is also the case that his practical philosophy is at variance with some basic characteristics of private ethics. This indicates that those reasons cannot be adequate or nullify the social dimension in Kant's moral thought. It is from this angle that I will attempt to rebut in the third section one of the more important reasons for interpreting his ethics as a private ethics, namely that the categorical imperative does not seem to ground such social duties as pursuing the ideal state and international peace. My procedure will be to show that each of the formulations of the categorical imperative, as they are explicated in the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, demands that we seek a moral society in which human agents try to make

one another happy. Considering my argument in the first section, this grounding of the duty to promote the highest good implies a grounding of these social duties as well. Nonetheless, I will provide some additional arguments that strengthen the link between the categorical imperative and social ethics. I will close the chapter by briefly examining the impact of the idea of the highest good on the status of individual duties in Kant's practical thought.

1. Social Ethics

To come to a first demonstration of the central significance of the highest good as a social duty in Kant's practical philosophy, I will analyze here two sections from his work which were written at the time when his critical ethics was in the process of development. Through them it will become clear that from the very beginning Kant was concerned with constructing his ethics as a social ethics. I will end my discussion by relating the concerns of the two sections to those of the later Kantian practical corpus, emphasizing their continuity.

While Kant was writing the *Critique of Pure Reason* he was lecturing on ethics, taking Alexander Baumgarten's work as his point of departure. Three students transcribed these lectures; their notes have been published as *Lectures on Ethics*, and the text is considered accurate.¹ Our concern is with the last section of this work, entitled "The Ultimate Destiny of the Human Race." Kant says that this destiny is the moral perfection of each individual as well as the happiness that arises within such a condition. Both here and in the next section that I will discuss, Kant suggests that each individual will be happy in the ideal society, but, since his remarks are made in passing, there seems to be no good reason to put too much weight on them.² What seems essential is that universal cooperation is a great step forward toward universal happiness. In Kant's later writings the moral society as the final destiny of humanity is described in terms of the highest good, the ethical commonwealth, the realm of ends, and the kingdom of God on earth. At first sight, he seems to be arguing in the lectures that the road toward universal cooperation and, hence, toward the highest good is a question of *each* individual seeking his own moral self-improvement. Kant states:

The universal end of mankind is the highest moral perfection. If we all so ordered our conduct that it should be in harmony with the universal end of mankind, the highest perfection would be attained. We must each of us,

therefore, endeavor to guide our conduct to this end; each of us must make such a contribution of his own that if all contributed similarly the result would be perfection. (*Lectures on Ethics*, p. 252).

Thus it may seem that the duty to promote the highest good is, in effect, a duty to seek our own moral betterment; when we all cooperate with our fellow beings the moral society will emerge.

The most obvious problem with this view is that the call for universal individual moral improvement is hardly a plausible scenario for change toward the highest good. Kant himself, however, is the first to point this out, for he continues directly with the following observations:

How far has the human race progressed on the road to perfection? If we look at the most enlightened portion of the world, we see the various States armed to the teeth, sharpening their weapons in time of peace the one against the other. The consequences of this are such that they block our approach to the universal end of perfection. The Abbot of St. Pierre has proposed that a senate of the nations should be formed. If this proposal were carried out it would be a great step forward, for the time now occupied by each nation in providing for its own security could then be employed for the advancement of mankind.

For Kant, then, the constant preparation for war, not to speak of war itself, is a serious obstacle on the road toward the moral society or highest good, making it imperative that a "senate of the nations" be formed that will guarantee international peace.

The importance of this claim cannot be sufficiently emphasized, for it makes clear that the duty to promote the highest good has a definite social content. Since peace between the nations is required to make the highest good possible, to seek peace and its institutional prerequisites is a social duty that follows from, or is an aspect of, the duty to promote the highest good. The claim also signifies that the highest good is a historical ideal that functions as an evaluative perspective. Kant judges his own time and society in terms of progress toward the moral society, and in this manner he comes to criticize the ruling powers of his day for establishing an unstable peace through military force. More specifically, Kant maintained that the "princes" were more interested in satisfying their "lust for despotic power" and defending their "individual sovereignty" than in upholding the "Idea of right." And, in a courageously straightforward manner, he said to his students: "[S]o far no prince has contributed one iota to the perfection of mankind . . . ; all of them look ever and only to the prosperity of their own countries, making that their chief concern" (*ibid.*, p. 253).

Having sketched this deplorable political state of affairs, Kant asked: "Wherein lies our hope?" At the time of his lectures, he based his hope for true peace between the nations chiefly on educational reform, at both the domestic and the civil levels. In accordance with this, he sought financial support for J. B. Basedow's private school in Dessau and publicly praised its educational program. What Kant saw as especially meritorious about this experimental school was that it taught religion along nonsectarian—and ultimately moral—lines.³ Thus we may interpret Kant as inviting his students to join him in his efforts toward a better educational system when he told them that "[t]he Basedow institutions give us hope, warm even though small" (*Lectures on Ethics*, p. 253). In a word, his more specific hope was that properly educated rulers and other servants of the state, reinforced by an enlightened public opinion, would bring about peace and general cooperation between the nations. And, of course, this hope implies one possible further substantiation of the duty to promote the highest good.

Kant ended his lectures with the statement that the realization of the final end of humanity is still centuries away and that, when it is realized, "the authority, not of governments, but of conscience within us, will . . . rule the world." This might suggest that he thought that in the moral society the state will be abolished, but this is to be doubted in light of the section that I will now discuss. It is from *Pure Reason* and is entitled "The Ideas in General."

The central issue of this section is Plato's conception of ideas and, in particular, his idea of the perfect city. Plato explicitly rejected conventional morality, as represented by Cephalus and his son, and Kant's own view here points in the same direction. Opening his discussion by castigating those philosophers who repudiate Plato's political vision as useless, impracticable, and as purely imaginary perfection, Kant argues that this vision should not be thrown aside, but rather clarified. From a critical-epistemological perspective, this clarification involves casting aside Plato's tendency to hypostatize ideas, conceiving them instead as a priori and, accordingly, as regulative. Further, we must limit the scope of ideas more than Plato did; their major value must be sought in the practical sphere, although they may also have a heuristic value for scientific inquiry. Last, the Platonic vision of the ideal society must be put in a new perspective. Then the insight will arise that

[a] constitution allowing *the greatest possible human freedom* in accordance with laws by which *the freedom of each is made to be consistent with that of all*

others—I do not speak of the greatest happiness, for this will follow of itself—is . . . a necessary idea, which must be taken as fundamental not only in first projecting a constitution but in all its laws. (p. 312; III: 258).

Since Kant has previously said that happiness will follow from the moral perfection of humanity, whereas now it is said to be the result of a perfect constitution and its corresponding laws, we can infer that the moral perfection of humanity and, hence, the moral society will develop within the framework of the state. Thus, the thesis that the conscience within us will rule the world when the moral society is realized means not that the state will be abolished, but that it will lose its repressive character. Another conclusion that emerges is that the duty to promote the highest good encompasses the duty to realize the perfect state. This conclusion is supported by Kant's further considerations of Plato.

Kant continues his criticism of the opponents of Plato with the contention that any appeal to adverse experience as a basis for claiming that visions of a perfect state have no practical value is misplaced, because such adverse experience would not have occurred in the first place if pure ideas had been used to make the laws. Kant turns the tables in similar fashion on those opponents who argue that present imperfect political institutions are the inevitable and unchangeable product of a flawed human nature. He argues that the real explanation for political imperfection is "the neglect of the pure ideas in the making of the laws" (*ibid.*). The interesting suggestion here is that what appears as a flawed human nature is itself in large measure the product of faulty political structures. This leads Kant to develop the radical claim that the more legislation and government harmonize with the idea of a perfect constitution the rarer punishment will become, and he argues that it is, therefore, rational to maintain, with Plato, that in a perfect state no punishment will be necessary. This radical claim—wrongly ascribed to Plato⁴—shows again that Kant perceptively held that certain sociopolitical conditions block moral progress. It also shows that the duty to seek the highest good includes the duty to pursue the perfect state, and, indeed, Kant asserts here that it is the duty of humanity to bring existing legal institutions as close as possible to the ideal. To what degree this can be accomplished cannot be said in advance, because "the issue depends on freedom; and it is in the power of freedom to pass beyond any and every specified limit." (*Pure Reason*, p. 312; III: 259).

The merit of Plato's work, Kant proceeds to argue, is that it demonstrates that ideas originate not in empirical reality but in

reason. This is of crucial importance, since “[n]othing is more reprehensible than to derive the laws prescribing what *ought to be done* from what *is done*, or to impose upon them the limits by which the latter is circumscribed” (313; 259). Kant’s ethics, then, makes its own progressive nature a question of principle. Practical reason projects and argues for moral ideals that always leave room for improvement of the existing state of affairs. Even the moral society is, strictly speaking, not an absolute final end; for, although his lectures might suggest otherwise, Kant usually writes about this ideal as one of moral perfection in the sense of virtue (and it is this meaning that I have adopted), not in the sense of “holiness” as the complete overcoming of the conflict between desire and reason. Thus moral self-improvement is possible within the moral society, which reflects Kant’s view that morality sets an infinite task.

Kant ends his analysis of Plato with some observations concerning the relation between ethics and epistemology, claiming, although the previous moral considerations give “to philosophy its particular dignity,” he must first deal with “a less resplendent, but still meritorious task, namely, to level the ground, and to render it sufficiently secure for moral edifices of these majestic dimensions.” He explains that uncritical reason with “its confident but fruitless search for hidden treasures . . . threaten[s] the security of the superstructures,” and that it is, therefore “[o]ur present duty . . . to obtain insight into the transcendental employment of pure reason” (313–14; 259–60). Dogmatic metaphysics, then, is to be refuted, so that the moral ideal can be grasped and grounded in the clearest possible manner. For Kant the danger of this kind of metaphysics is not so much that its alleged transcendent insights may be antithetical to moral praxis (although this is a concern), but that it brings about as its very opposite a skepticism that “wars against morality” (29; 25). Generalizing these remarks, we can infer that epistemology is logically prior to ethics in that it must prepare the ground for a philosophically defensible ethics, but that ethics itself is practically prior to epistemology, because the development of an adequate epistemology is a task set by the highest good. This integrates Kant’s epistemology into his practical philosophy.

It needs to be stressed that neither in his lectures nor in his Plato discussion is Kant making the claim that ideal institutions such as the perfect state or a “senate of nations” *cause* moral progress. Such a claim would undermine his doctrine of moral autonomy. The moral agent must be his own cause. That is, genuine moral action is the result of self-determination; to act morally is to

act in accordance with the self-legislated moral law out of respect for this law. It would, therefore, be a contradiction in terms to speak of "caused" or "forced" moral progress. What Kant does say is that poor institutional arrangements and other deplorable sociopolitical conditions *block* moral progress and that the removal of these impediments facilitates the development of the moral disposition (the good will). He explicates his view in *Perpetual Peace*, while describing the moral relevance of the institutionalization of the rule of law:

[Government] not only gives a moral veneer (*causae non causae*) to the whole but actually facilitates the development of the moral disposition to a direct respect for the law by placing a barrier against the outbreak of unlawful inclinations. Each person believes that he himself would hold the concept of law sacred and faithfully follow it provided he were sure that he could expect the same from others, and the government does in part assure him of this. Thereby a great step (though not yet a moral step) is taken toward morality, which is attachment to this concept of duty for its own sake and without regard to hope of a similar response from others (p. 123n; VI: 462–63n).

The rule of law, then, guarantees equal external freedom for each individual, as Kant's previous definition of the perfect constitution and its laws puts it, and this creates a climate favorable to moral autonomy, because it is to a much lesser degree the case that the threat posed by others tempts one to act immorally.⁵ Moreover, the external rule, we may hope, will gradually become internalized; the discipline from without becomes discipline from within. The rule of law is also important for creating conditions favorable to the pursuit of happiness, but Kant in general stresses this aspect less than the legal facilitation of moral progress proper. Similar observations apply to the moral significance of international peace and cooperation. Further, Kant argues in *Judgment* that the fine arts and the sciences, although not making us morally better, "win us in large measure from the tyranny of the sense propensions, and thus prepare men for a lordship in which reason alone shall have authority" (p. 284; § 83; V: 513). In conclusion, then, cultural progress, including sociopolitical progress, can facilitate moral development and prepare us for this kind of development, but the realization of moral perfection is possible only through moral autonomy.

Kant's major works on practical philosophy were written after the two sections just discussed. The passage cited from *Peace* illustrates that certain changes emerge within his practical thought. Legal progress appears here as merely setting the stage for moral

progress, whereas his Plato analysis indicates that earlier he had held that legal and moral progress mutually condition each other—that is, that legal progress requires moral progress, and vice versa.⁶ Much more striking than such changes, however, is the continuity and consistency of Kant's project. We may see the major practical writings as fundamentally concerned with explicating and elaborating the ideas found in these two sections. A brief turn to the various practical writings will underline this. The guiding thread throughout is the highest good as a social duty. First of all, the political writings address the political institutions that make this good possible. The perfect state is further specified as republican, and, although Kant develops his own unique peace proposal, there remain certain affinities with the proposal of the Abbot of St. Pierre. Besides, he continued to express his sympathy with this earlier plan and to emphasize that it is our duty to seek peace within and between the states.⁷ Further, in his essays on history, Kant investigates whether past historical developments are a source of hope with respect to the possibility of the republican state and international peace, arguing that this hope is conducive to moral action aimed at these political ends. Again, he looks for a specific "historical sign" that supports hope for progress. This sign is no longer the Basedow school, but the French Revolution, a world-historical event that Kant said engendered enthusiasm among its spectators, reflecting their moral interest in promoting republican ideals. He also relates this political event, and the history of humanity in general, to the possibility of the moral society, or highest good. The concern with the moral society is, moreover, central to Kant's writings on religion. The church was in his time a dominant social force, and it is in this light that his contention is to be judged that the church must reorganize itself on the basis of the moral ideal. For Kant this means that the church, and all religious undertakings, must anticipate and imitate the ideal of the moral society. His sympathy with the religious instruction at the Basedow school prefigures this view. Last, Kant's moral writings proper are in various ways concerned with the highest good as a social duty. For example, the need for grounding this duty is expressed in his Plato analysis, and I will argue in the third section of this chapter that the categorical imperative is adequate to the task. And, to give a different twist to Kant's statement in the lectures, cited previously, that "our conduct . . . should be in harmony with the universal end of mankind," his later moral writings proper make this into a general criterion for determining the morally permissible means by which we may pursue the highest

good. In a word, this criterion is that the means must mirror this end.

These synoptic remarks suffice as a first demonstration of the central significance of the highest good as a social duty in Kant's work. This duty integrates all the branches of the critical philosophy. We may, then, interpret the highest good as the final and comprehensive end that guides the critical enterprise in its various stages of development and completion. This project also argues in accordance with its own basic rationale that humanity ought to actualize the moral ideal. This means that Kant's social ethics adheres to and exemplifies the primacy of praxis. Practical reason views the world in both its natural and human aspects as a field for the expression and realization of the highest good, and it holds, moreover, that our ultimate purpose and satisfaction are to be found in transformative activity directed toward this ideal. This idea of the primacy of praxis is one aspect of Kant's "primacy of pure practical reason."⁸ Lucien Goldmann in his *Immanuel Kant* captured this aspect of Kant's philosophy quite well when he said that for Kant the fundamental category of existence is "*the task of creating a world.*"⁹ Combining the idea of the primacy of praxis with that of the highest good, we come to the conclusion that a core thesis of Kant's social ethics is that (empirical) humanity, in order to express its humanity (rational/moral nature), must produce humanity (the moral order).

2. Private Ethics

From a *sociological* perspective we may see our duties as emerging from two basic sources: social networks and moral principles.¹⁰ Many of our duties arise in virtue of our membership in the legal/political community, our occupation, family relationships, and other social ties and functions, but these obligations leave room for a wide variety of moral actions, such as contributing to the struggle for peace and helping others in need, which should be performed in view of certain moral principles. Which of our duties emerge from social networks and which from moral principles is, of course, an individual and historical question. What characterizes private ethics is that it (implicitly) limits the duties that have moral principles as their source to individual duties. Social ethics, to the contrary, maintains that, beyond the duties arising from our social networks, we have not only individual duties but also the obligation to contribute to the realization of ideal institutions. Pri-

vate ethics is the dominant view of morality in our society, and this makes it not altogether surprising that the social dimension of Kant's ethics often receives inadequate attention and that his ethics is at times even portrayed as a mere private ethics. Be this as it may, there are several reasons for interpreting Kant's practical philosophy along these private lines. Two of these reasons must be mentioned at this point.

The first is that the categorical imperative seems to lead to individual duties and passive social duties, not to active social duties. This is suggested by the fact that all the illustrations that Kant offers in the *Foundations* of how we should use this imperative for deriving specific duties seem to concern individual duties or passive social ones. The illustrations are that we should not commit suicide or make false promises for our private gain and that we should develop our talents and help others in need. We may see the first two of these duties as passive social duties arising from the social networks of Kant's time, which explains why he sees only the last two duties, which appear to be concerned with the ends of particular individuals, as meritorious (p. 48. IV: 288–9). Further, Kant uses the categorical imperative in *The Metaphysics of Morals* to ground two types of duties that encompass all our duties: the duties of justice and the duties of virtue, neither of which seem to include active social duties. The duties of justice in principle can be legally enforced, and their common denominator is that we respect the equal right of each individual to external freedom. (For Kant this right is the basis for a variety of common civil and political rights.) There is a gap between this demand of passively respecting the right of others and the demand that we actively seek the perfect state and peace between the nations as conditions under which such a right is secured for all human beings.¹¹ So the duties of justice do not seem to include active social duties. Also, we can be forced to uphold the standards of the perfect state and international peace once they are actualized—this would be the fulfillment of passive social duties—, but we cannot be forced by imperfect legal/political arrangements to transform them into perfect ones. Considering Kant's definition of the duties of justice, then, active social duties must be duties of virtue, the concept of which presupposes the moral motive (internal coercion versus external coercion). However, all the duties of virtue that Kant mentions in *The Metaphysics of Morals* are individual duties, except for his claim that it is a duty of virtue to fulfill the duties of justice with a proper motive. In short, it seems that his moral theory proper grounds a private ethics, not a social ethics.

The second reason for interpreting Kant's ethics as a private ethics concerns his contention that it is not within our power to realize the highest good as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness. Kant argues that the affirmation of the tenability of this ideal is ultimately an act of faith (the postulate about God), and this suggests that the relevance of the highest good must be sought not in the realm of human action but in the sphere of (a metaphysically interpreted) religious hope. The elimination of the highest good as setting a human task leads us back on the road to private ethics, especially if we take into account the first reason for interpreting his ethics in these terms. The two reasons, in other words, are complementary, making together a case for Kant's ethics as a private ethics which we cannot ignore. I will address the first reason in the next section, and the second reason in the next chapter. Now I wish to point out three fundamental characteristics of private ethics, each of which is at variance with Kant's ethics. This argument indicates that the two reasons just cited are all in all not adequate or overriding. It also reinforces the conclusion from the previous section that the duty to change society in light of some moral ideal plays a central role in Kant's ethics. My model for private ethics is conventional morality as it is shaped by the capitalist-liberal tradition, but it can readily be seen that similar remarks apply to any private ethics whatever.

A first basic characteristic of private ethics is that it is implicitly conservative.¹² Typically it does not argue for a conservative viewpoint, but rather accepts conservatism without any argument for doing so. Kant's ethics, to the contrary, formulates a principled rejection of conservatism. A few remarks on conservatism may help to clarify these points.

Michael Oakshott in "On Being Conservative"¹³ rightly argues that conservatism is best understood as a disposition rather than as a body of beliefs. He writes:

The general characteristics of this disposition are not difficult to discern. . . . They center upon a propensity to use and to enjoy what is available rather than to wish for or to look for something else; to delight in what is present rather than what was or what may be (p. 168).

Thus the conservative comes to emphasize that "[c]hanges . . . have to be suffered" and that "[t]o be conservative . . . is to prefer the familiar to the unknown, to prefer the tried to the untried, fact to mystery, the actual to the possible, the limited to the unbounded, the near to the distant, . . . the convenient to the

perfect, present laughter to utopian bliss." (pp. 169 and 171). The political implications, I think, are clear. The conservative favors the preservation of existing sociopolitical structures, looks with suspicion upon innovation, and, in general, considers legitimate only those changes which maintain and reinforce the status quo.

Private ethics neglects the possibility that it may be our obligation to change existing institutions in light of some moral ideal. Hence, such ethics is *implicitly* conservative because it does not bring its acceptance of the status quo into the open. It is conservatism by default. Thus it may be the case that the moral agent of private ethics or conventional morality accepts the sociopolitical given for reasons different than those of the affirmed conservative. His acceptance may perhaps be based on political resignation rather than on a preference for the existing state of affairs. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, who interpreted Kant's ethics as a private ethics and who saw his highest good as a mere object of religious hope, came to the conclusion that political resignation is the mark of his ethics. They wrote in *The German Ideology*¹⁴:

The state of affairs in Germany at the end of the last century is fully reflected in Kant's *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*. . . . The impotent German burghers did not get any further than "good will." Kant was satisfied with "good will" alone, even if it remained entirely without result, and he transferred the *realization* of this good will, the harmony between it and the needs and impulses of individuals, to *the world beyond*. Kant's good will fully corresponds to the impotence, depression and wretchedness of the German burghers, whose petty interests were never capable of developing into the common, national interests of a class and who were, therefore, constantly exploited by the bourgeois of all other nations (p. 208).

But whether political resignation or a silent favoring of the status quo guides the agent of private ethics, the practical result is the same: conservatism is the hidden premise of private ethics.

This uncritical acceptance of the status quo is not a feature of Kant's practical philosophy. His social ethics explicated its own political commitment; it operated at the progressive edge of his time and pushed forward the existing limits. So the interpretation of his ethics as a private ethics seems to be wrong. Note, moreover, that Kant's ethics offered a principled rejection of conservatism in claiming, as we have seen in the section on Plato, that "[n]othing is more reprehensible than to derive the laws prescribing what *ought to be done* from what *is done*, or to impose upon them the limits by

which the latter is circumscribed." The Kantian agent, then, adheres to a preference scale which is the very opposite of that of the affirmed conservative; he prefers the unbounded to the limited, the perfect to the convenient, the possible to the actual, etc.

A second basic characteristic of private ethics is that it lacks any awareness of the relevance of history for moral praxis. The agent of private ethics is absorbed in his own limited present. His concern is not the past, present, and future of humanity, but the well-being of atomized individuals. The alternative is not to make oneself at home in history, as Hegel urged us to do, and to embrace all the suffering in history as a mere inevitable moment toward the good. Rather, the suffering of the past must be related to moral praxis directed toward the future. Can this suffering be redeemed by the realization of a truly human society, or does it make such a society altogether impossible? Is history solely a source of despair, a chain of senseless and violent events, or can it also be a source of hope? And is this hope required for moral action that aims at a better society? These are questions that a private ethics fails to address. In contrast, Kant's ethics, as we will see later in more detail, deals with these questions or invites us to reflect upon them. So again the interpretation of his ethics as a private ethics is contradicted; this interpretation cannot satisfactorily explain why Kant turns so often to history in his practical writings.

A final basic characteristic of private ethics is that it does not offer a comprehensive end in view (a totality concept) that positively synthesizes individual moral actions. Thus within the contours of private ethics moral actions seem to lack any real continuity and unity, either in terms of their intentions or of their consequences.¹⁵ To elaborate, private ethics tends to sketch moral actions and objectives not as an important aspect of the life plan of the individual but merely as conditioning this life plan in a negative manner. The life plan of the agent consists of the pursuit of private ends, and, hence, moral endeavors are seen as mere constraints. Or, at best, morality is positively esteemed as the task of furthering the ends of some particular individuals. It is true that some agents of private ethics may focus their lives upon this task; yet this is not a demand set by private ethics, and it is not at all evident that such an end can successfully function as a totality concept. The situation is altogether different for Kant's social ethics. The idea of the primacy of praxis in conjunction with that of the highest good implies that the Kantian moral agent incorporates the highest good as a social ideal into his life plan. Kant's own life

illustrates this point, since we may view his intellectual labor as his way of fulfilling the duty to promote the highest good. His well-known patterned life style, then, is to be understood from the perspective of intellectual discipline as moral discipline. The highest good and its intermediate ends can also satisfactorily function as a totality concept for a life style that unfolds more directly within the sociopolitical arena. Granted, the actions of the agent with this type of life style may not have the intended consequences and may be aborted by social and political repression. Many human lives have been failures in this respect; but this only emphasizes the point that there is a duty to promote the highest good. We may see it as a duty owed to those in the past who have struggled for the ideal without success.¹⁶

3. The Highest Good and the Categorical Imperative

The discussion in the previous section poses a clear problem: Kant's ethics conflicts with private ethics on at least three basic grounds, and, yet, the categorical imperative, as the central moral principle of his ethics, seems to lead to private ethics. This problem will be solved if it can be shown that the categorical imperative grounds the duty to promote the highest good; for we have seen that this duty grounds a variety of social duties, making Kant's ethics a social ethics. Accordingly we must show that the highest good (defined as a moral society in which human beings attempt to make one another happy) is the final obligatory end set by the moral law. Admittedly, it also would be possible to ground Kant's ethics as a social ethics through a reconstruction of the categorical imperative which focused on showing that this imperative leads directly to such social duties as seeking the perfect state and international peace.¹⁷ What makes the "highest good" strategy more attractive for our purposes is that it is much more comprehensive, leaving room for a specification of our social duties that varies with our historical understanding and circumstances. Thus we may later come to the conclusion, without thereby violating the basic tenet of Kant's social ethics, that the highest good requires for our present historical situation different or additional social duties from those Kant proposed. Another distinct advantage of my strategy is that it can do justice to the fact that Kant claimed that the moral law demands that we pursue the highest good. My procedure will be to analyze the different formulations of the categori-

cal imperative in the *Foundations*, arguing in each case that the highest good is the final moral end set by this imperative. Initially, my analysis will be in the main a step-by-step reconstruction of the Kantian argument, but I will end with some critical comments and suggestions of how this argument can be strengthened.

In the *Foundations* we find six formulations of the categorical imperative. Strictly speaking, Kant should have discussed eight formulas—four basic ones, each having its own *typic*. (A *typic* adds to its basic formula a type or model of the moral law and its final end. This type is the natural order, regulatively interpreted, as it applies to both human and external nature.) Kant, however, does not mention that the *autonomy formula* has a *typic*, and he fails to draw a distinction between basic formula and *typic* with respect to the *humanity-as-an-end-in-itself formula*. This imprecision is understandable in light of his contention that the different formulas are only so many different expressions of one and the same moral law. Many Kant interpreters have rejected this claim, but I think it is defensible in that the common denominator of the formulas is that they all demand that we seek the highest good. I will, accordingly, limit my analysis to the six formulas put forward by Kant.

What is the final end set by the moral law? Or, to put the question differently, what is the final purpose of general obedience to the moral law? Kant's answer can be found in *Lectures on Ethics*:

Moral goodness consists . . . in the submission of our will to rules whereby all our voluntary actions are brought into a harmony which is universally valid. Such a rule, which forms the first principle of the possibility of the harmony of all free wills, is the moral rule Our actions must be regulated if they are to harmonize, and their regulation is effected by the moral law (p. 17).

The moral law, then, has a final purpose that is social in nature. It must make possible a harmony of free or rational wills. To be sure, the moral law in this passage is not yet the moral law of the critical ethics, but, as will soon become clear, a proper understanding of the categorical imperative leads to the same social end.

The Universal-law Formula

The first formula of the categorical imperative, the *universal-law formula*, states:

Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law (*Foundations*, p. 39; IV: 279).

This formula might suggest that the categorical imperative must be seen as a test or procedure for determining the limiting conditions of the pursuit of one's private ends. It is undeniable that this is one aspect of the universal-law formula, as is indicated by Kant's illustrations cited earlier; but to limit the formula to this purpose, as so often is done, is to distort Kant's meaning. To begin with, the view that the virtuous agent wills to subject *only* his own maxims to the universality test is too restricted. The moral agent who adopts the standpoint of practical reason wills not merely that his own maxims be tested in this way but that *everyone* act only on maxims that can be willed to become universal laws. That this is so we can infer from Kant's claim that what characterizes the immoral agent is that he wills that everyone except himself obey the moral law. To use one of Kant's own examples, the immoral agent wishes that everyone else follow the policy of keeping promises, so that he himself will be able to make a false promise for the sake of his own private gain. The virtuous agent, to the contrary, does not will to make an exception for himself or for a particular group he is part of, and this means that he wills that everyone subject his maxims to the universality test. Another consideration is that reason is not particular but universal; its demands hold for all rational beings, and so the agent who adopts the standpoint of reason, the virtuous agent, wills that all rational agents follow its demands.

Kant holds that, if everyone subjects his maxims to the universality test, the pursuit of private ends will no longer give rise to conflict. The purpose of the categorical imperative, then, is to make possible a harmony of rational wills, and the agent who obeys this imperative out of respect for the moral law wills this harmony. In the words of H. J. Paton:

Kant's view is clearly that coherence of rational wills can be based only on obedience to one and the same universal law as such, and that without this there can be no genuine coherence

If this is so, in seeking to obey universal law as such we are seeking to realize the condition of coherence among rational wills.¹⁸

That Kant indeed adheres to this view is indicated by his argument that in order to deduce the moral law we must abstract from any object of desire as the determinant of moral action, because the diversity of the objects of desire among human agents leads to conflict when any given such object is made into the moral guideline for human action. Thus he states in *Critique of Practical Reason* that the desire for happiness is inadequate as a practical

law, because general obedience to it results in "the extreme opposite of harmony, the most arrant conflict." He jokes that the "harmony" arising from this law resembles "that depicted in a certain satirical poem as existing between a married couple bent on going to ruin, 'Oh, marvelous harmony, what he wants is what she wants.'"¹⁹ The point of the moral law as a formal law, then, is to come to a harmony that is not a mere accidental, and at times disastrous, harmony (cf. Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 140).

To do justice to Kant's view, we must take an additional step beyond the interpretation that the categorical imperative is only a negative test that limits the pursuit of one's private ends. Thus far it seems that the virtuous person aims at a harmony of rational wills so that everyone can pursue his own private ends. In other words, he seeks indirectly to promote universal happiness. This harmony of rational wills, however, encompasses universal external freedom, and we have seen that for Kant such freedom has the additional and even more important purpose of universal moral perfection. Accordingly, the virtuous person seeks to bring about conditions that are conducive to the development of the moral disposition. Considering Kant's notion of autonomy, this is all the virtuous person can do in the area of moral improvement besides seeking his own moral betterment; for the development of the moral disposition is an autonomous task. I may add that this duty to seek the conditions of universal moral perfection can be derived directly from the universal-law formula. The virtuous agent seeks the conditions of his own autonomy, and he cannot rationally will these conditions and their prerequisites while failing to promote them for others. The universalization of this maxim undermines the very same conditions of autonomy that the virtuous agent treasures for himself.

There remains one step from the universal-law formula to the duty to promote the highest good. One aspect of this duty is that we not only indirectly, but directly, promote the realization of a world in which human agents seek to make one another happy. Kant argues that it is our duty to contribute to the happiness of other agents. As he often puts it, we must make their individual ends our own end, provided that the pursuit of these ends can pass the universality test. In the *Foundations*, the duty to make the ends of others one's own end is often put in negative fashion as the duty to help others in need, whereas in *The Doctrine of Virtue* Kant states that the happiness of others is an end of practical reason. The difference between the two formulations seems rather small, for promoting the happiness of others is foremost a question of

relieving them of their hardship. The real problem is that both formulations seem to fall short of what is required by the highest good as a social duty. This duty demands not merely that we promote the realization of individual ends, but that we direct our efforts toward the realization of *a world* in which all persons promote one another's ends. This apparent gap, however, can be bridged along by now familiar lines. The virtuous agent does not merely will that he alone make the ends of others his own end, but rather wills that everyone act likewise. So this agent is morally interested in conditions that directly promote universal happiness. And again, the universality of practical reason reinforces this claim. That Kant does indeed have this broader concern in mind becomes clear when we turn to the second formula of the categorical imperative.

The Natural-law Formula

In the *Foundations* this formula is stated as follows:

Act as though the maxim of your action were by your will to become a universal law of nature (p. 39; IV: 279).

The formula is expressed more clearly in *Practical Reason*:

Ask yourself whether, if the action which you propose should take place by a law of nature of which you yourself were a part, you could regard it as possible through your will (p. 72; V: 77).

Kant presents the *natural-law formula* as an explication of the first formula. This explication offers a gain in two respects. First, the natural-law formula suffers to a lesser degree from creating the impression that the categorical imperative is merely a restrictive principle. Kant's real meaning now becomes more apparent, namely that in testing our maxims we are constructing a moral world. Second, a guideline is provided for this constructive activity. The natural world and its laws serve in the second formula as a type of the moral law (the law of freedom) and its final end (the moral world). Hence, both the first and second formulas demand that the moral agent act as if he were a legislator in a possible moral order (making universal laws), but only in the second formula is the regulatively interpreted natural order presented as a model that helps to clarify what such a legislation involves.

In Kant's writings, the natural order is approached from two different angles—the causal perspective and the teleological per-

spective. Kant holds that, from an epistemological point of view, the two perspectives are not contradictory but complementary—that is, only causal claims can be scientific claims, but teleological observations have an indispensable heuristic value in helping to discover causal connections. Both perspectives have practical value, but I will emphasize the teleological perspective, because only this perspective shows that mutual promotion of happiness is an essential aspect of the harmony of rational wills.

There are at least three features of the causal perspective that are relevant to using the natural order as a model for the moral order. First, Kant believes that natural laws are characterized by universal uniformity in the sense that these laws do not admit of exceptions.²⁰ We have already encountered the practical value of this idea. Kant states:

When we observe ourselves in any transgression of a duty, we find that we do not actually will that our maxim should become a universal law. That is impossible for us; rather, the contrary of this maxim should remain as a law generally, and we only take the liberty of making an exception to it for ourselves or for the sake of our inclination, and for this one occasion (*Foundations*, p. 42; IV: 282).

Second, laws of nature are in principle public. The analogical value here is that maxims and governmental policies, as well as juridical laws, which cannot become public are unjust. Kant claims with respect to the former: "A maxim which I cannot divulge without defeating my own purpose must be kept secret if it is to succeed; and, if I cannot publicly avow it without inevitably exciting universal opposition to my project, the necessary and universal opposition which can be foreseen a priori is due only to the injustice with which the maxim threatens everyone (*Peace*, pp. 129–30; VI: 469). Third, physical reciprocity can function as a model for the reciprocity of legal obligations. The law of the equality of action and reaction, which is a specific expression of the third analogy of experience presented in the first *Critique*, exhibits in analogy that each citizen is, or, more precisely, should be, equally subject to legal coercion. Thus it is an act of injustice to exempt oneself from rules that one wills that others obey, and the analogy exposes this. The restraint of others is not met by an equal restraint of oneself. There is a disproportion between action and reaction, and this makes impossible external freedom for all, just as it would prevent the free movement of natural bodies.²¹

Although the first of these three analogies seems to commit

Kant to a rigoristic viewpoint, I think that this would be stretching the analogy too far. His point seems to be not that moral rules never allow for exceptions, but that these exceptions should be rationally and morally motivated rather than determined by our inclinations. In other words, exceptions should be guided by rule-governed behavior, as is illustrated by Kant's numerous "casuistical questions" in *Virtue*. Much more problematic is the second analogy and its resulting publicity criterion. It seems, for example, to lead to too easy a condemnation of all forms of deception as well as of many forms of political resistance. I will later discuss Kant's view of the right to revolution and to other forms of political resistance, and it will then become clear that he does, indeed, use the publicity criterion to come to a rejection of this right. For the moment it suffices to note that the difficulty with the second analogy seems to arise from a general ambiguity embedded in the natural-law formula. It is one thing to claim that our maxims must be formulated from the perspective of the ideal of the moral order as a natural order or that we must always attempt to mirror this ideal in our actions; it is another thing to claim that we must act as if we were already living in the moral order as a natural order. I assume that Kant adhered to the first claim, not the second, and, yet, his use of the publicity criterion seems to be based on this second claim. For, if I am the only virtuous person in a world of devils, universal public outcry over my maxim does not show anything at all about the wrongness of this maxim. What is more important, however, is that in general the failure to take into account that we do not live in a world of saints may lead to immoral behavior.²²

In order to discuss the practical significance of the teleological perspective we must briefly turn to Kant's notion of an organism. The guideline is that there is an analogy between the concept of a natural organism and that of the moral order as an order of universal cooperation ("society as an organism"). Kant develops his concept of an organism in *Judgment*. He says that a first defining characteristic of an organism is that the function and existence of the parts are determined by the function and existence of the whole, but he notes that this is not a sufficient characterization of a natural organism, since an artificial product satisfies this condition as well. For a product to be classified as a product of nature it is, secondly, necessary that "its parts should so combine in the unity of a whole that they are reciprocally cause and effect of each other's form. Only in this way can the idea of the whole conversely (reciprocally) determine the form and the combination of all

the parts."²³ This difference between a product of nature and an artificial product—centered around the observation that only the former displays natural development or growth—is further explicated by Kant in the following passage, which also addresses the first defining characteristic:

In . . . a product of nature, every part not only exists *by means of* the other parts, but is thought as existing *for the sake of* the others and the whole—that is as an (organic) instrument. Thus, however, it might be an artificial instrument, . . . but also its parts are all organs reciprocally *producing* one another. This can never be the case with artificial instruments . . . Only a [natural] product . . . is an *organized* and *self-organizing being* (*Judgment*, p. 220; § 65; V: 451–2).

According to Kant, then, an organism is characterized by its capacity to produce its own organization and unity. The parts produce one another, and their interaction determines the form of the whole; conversely, what the whole is (or will be) determines the way the parts interact to maintain (or to produce) it.

It is to be stressed that Kant is engaged here not in a teleological metaphysics but in a critique of judgment. The idea of the whole or natural purpose must be understood as “the ground of cognition for him who is judging it,” and Kant explains this as meaning that “[t]he concept of a thing as in itself a natural purpose . . . is no constitutive concept of understanding or of reason, but . . . a regulative concept for reflective judgment, to guide our investigation about objects of this kind by a distant analogy with our own causality according to purposes generally” (pp. 220 and 222; 451 and 453). No claim, then, is made that purposive causality is determinative of reality—only causal connections proper are constitutive. The same critical position is taken when Kant deals with the idea that nature in its totality is a purposive whole. He argues that this idea necessarily follows from the notion that an organism is a purposive totality and claims that with respect to collective nature a maxim holds which is also applicable to organisms: “viz. everything in the world [or organisms] is some way good for something; nothing is vain in it” (p. 225; § 67; 457). And again Kant emphasizes that this principle is regulative and not constitutive.

The teleological perspective on nature exhibits in analogy several important aspects of the moral order. In *Judgment* Kant points out some homologies between the perfect state and the natural order as a teleological order. Presumably alluding to the French Revolution, he wrote:

In a recent complete transformation of a great people into a state the word *organization* for the regulation of magistracies, etc., and even of the whole body politic, has often been fitly used. For in such a whole every member should surely be purpose as well as means, and, while all work together toward the possibility of the whole, each should be determined as regards place and function by means of the Idea of the whole.²⁴

Considering Kant's notion of the perfect state, however, it seems more accurate to say that the natural order conceived of as an organism portrays in analogical fashion the moral order as such (of which the perfect state is only an aspect). Using Kant's definition of an organized product of nature, it follows in analogy that the moral order "*is one in which every part [read: person] is reciprocally purpose [end] and means.*"²⁵ Thus within this order each individual fulfills the task of contributing to the realization of the ends or purposes of other moral agents, just as the parts produce one another in an organism, and this will be done either directly by making the ends of others one's own ends or indirectly by making possible the moral order. The realization of human purposes comprises two types of ends: moral perfection, and the fulfillment of individual ends that pass the universality test. Finally, the analogy shows that the moral order can be established only if each person is guided by the idea of the whole, and its continuation is subject to the same precondition. The natural-law formula, then, projects the same ideal as the universal-law formula, although more clearly so: in the moral order as a harmony of rational wills human agents uphold and promote the conditions of universal moral perfection (autonomy) and seek to make one another happy.

The teleological model is not free from difficulties. A minor problem is that the model does not fit with the dominant contemporary conception of external nature. (To some degree the same can be said of the causal model.) Accordingly, one might object that not all organisms seem to be well adapted to their purposes and that the Darwinian view of nature evokes the idea of universal conflict rather than that of universal cooperation. This is not a serious objection, because, after all, Kant appealed to the dominant conception of nature in his own time merely in order to facilitate understanding of what legislation in the moral order involves. Granted that the model has lost its practical value (although recently growing "ecological awareness" points in the opposite direction), the task is to seek a model more appropriate for our own time. Or, alternatively, an argument can be made that Kant's ethics can dispense with such a model altogether.²⁶

Another, and more serious, difficulty with the teleological model is that it is misleading in at least three important respects. First, it is implausible to hold that an organism (the whole) exists *for the sake of* the parts—a thesis which is to be distinguished from the correct claim that the whole *determines* the parts and vice versa. Yet Kant held that the moral order exists for the sake of the legislators (all moral agents) who form it. Here, then, the analogy fails; for it has totalitarian overtones that are not present in Kant's work, to wit, that the legislators exist for the sake of the whole, the moral society. Second, the analogy conceals rather than reveals the fact that an essential difference between the natural order (or organism) and the human order (or individual) is that only the latter is a rational order—not given, but to be created. Kant makes this sufficiently clear on the institutional level, but not always on the individual level. (In this regard his historical writings are to be preferred to his moral writings proper.) For example, his discussion of suicide and sexual morality is colored by the view that certain purposes pertain to human nature, such as self-preservation and procreation, and that to act contrary to these purposes is unnatural and, therefore, immoral.²⁷ Kant neglects here the open character of human nature (human beings are what they make of themselves) and fails to argue that human nature is to be transformed in light of the moral ideal (the ethicization of human nature). Just as the moral society requires the transformation of institutions as well as of external nature, so the ideal of the human agent as a rational order (i.e., the reconciliation between virtue and the pursuit of happiness) requires the transformation of human nature. And, of course, the two processes reinforce each other.

The third way in which the teleological model is misleading is that (unlike my interpretation) it may suggest that the moral society must be defined as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness. The problem is that this model does not bring out the distinction between moral well-being (virtue) and physical well-being (happiness). A well-functioning organism is one in which each part realizes its purpose; thus it may seem in analogy that the moral society as a well-functioning society is one in which each individual realizes his ends of virtue and happiness. This conclusion, however, is based on equivocation. The moral society is by definition a society of moral well-being (virtue), and what the teleological model exhibits in analogy is that all human beings in this society aim at universal physical well-being; but the failure to realize universal well-being in the latter sense does not imply a failure to realize universal well-being in the former sense. Equiv-

ocating on the two senses of well-being, it seems that the highest good as the final end of the moral law is the union of universal virtue and universal happiness; the failure to realize universal happiness appears as a deontic failing. I suspect that Kant's usual definition of the highest good is based on a similar equivocation, but I will postpone consideration of this question until the next chapter.

The road through Kant's teleology leads from the duty to obey the moral law to the duty to promote the highest good. In testing his maxims by way of the natural-law formula, the moral agent comes to construct a moral order in which human beings seek to enhance the universal ends of moral perfection and happiness, and if this agent is virtuous, he seeks to act on maxims that accord with and mirror this ideal. Again, it is to be stressed—and Kant would have avoided much misunderstanding if he had emphasized this—that the agent with a virtuous motive wills that everyone act along these lines. In other words, the virtuous agent wills the moral order as a natural order, that is, as a moral society in which human beings seek to make one another happy. Willing this is identical to willing the highest good. Generalizing this result, it follows that the universal requirement to obey the moral law implies the duty of humanity to promote the highest good. As Kant puts it in *Practical Reason*, “the moral law ideally transfers us into a nature in which reason would bring forth the highest good [as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness] were it accompanied by sufficient physical capacities; and it determines our will to impart to the sensuous world the form [universal law as such] of a system of rational beings” (p. 45; V: 50). Switching from one conception of the highest good to the other, as Kant presumably unwittingly does here, it seems that the latter task is within our power, the former perhaps not. But even if we come to the conclusion (with Kant) that humanity lacks the physical capacities to make each individual happy in the moral society, it remains the case that we must try to approximate such a condition. The second formula of the categorical imperative, then, demands that we *promote* the highest good as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness or *realize* the highest good as a moral order of universal cooperation.

The Humanity-as-an-end-in-itself Formula

Kant puts the third formula of the categorical imperative in the following words:

Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only (*Foundations*, p. 47; IV: 287).

The formula is often rephrased as demanding respect for persons: we must treat ourselves and others as rational moral agents. Thus, to use once more Kant's own illustrations, self-respect means that we should not commit suicide but should develop our talents, because we must both sustain and develop ourselves as rational moral beings, whereas respect for others involves on similar grounds such duties as helping them in need and not deceiving them for the sake of our private gain. The problem with this interpretation is that it fails to do justice to the *social* dimension in Kant's moral thought. This dimension is also visible in the third formula.

The first thing to be noticed is that Kant does not speak of "respect for persons" in the above formula, but of treating "humanity *in* your own person or *in* that of another as an end and never as a means only." The question to be asked is how humanity (*Menschheit*) can be *in* the individual. Kant provides the answer in the first illustration of the third formula: "[H]e who contemplates suicide will ask himself whether his action can be consistent with the *idea of humanity* as an end in itself" (*ibid.*, my emphasis). In view of the basic premises of Kant's social ethics it is evident that this idea is a regulative or task-setting idea. Correspondingly, the idea of humanity does not refer to humanity as it now exists but to humanity as it *ought* to exist. This insight is clearly expressed by the neo-Kantian Cohen, who reformulates the third formula as follows:

"Do not act as an I, in the empirical sense, but as the I of mankind, in the ideal sense. Regard your own person as well as any other not in the physical, racial, or narrowly historical terms of individual existence, but exclusively as an embodiment of the eternal, world-historical idea of mankind."²⁸

Cohen adds: "Mankind is man's final purpose and goal." This ultimate purpose is the highest good; it is the idea of the moral order as applied to the human condition. Thus we can link the third formula with the two previous ones. To treat humanity in oneself or in others as an end is to act only on maxims that are consistent with the idea of the moral order; it is to act only on maxims that can become universal laws or laws of nature.

To elaborate, in projecting the moral law the moral agent projects the legislative self (the noumenal self, the ideal person) and with it the moral order of legislators, or humanity as it ought to be. As Jean-Paul Sartre writes in *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, "In choosing myself, I choose man. [T]he man who involves himself [is] a lawmaker who is, at the same time, choosing all mankind as well as himself."²⁹ Thus in committing oneself to the moral law, one commits oneself to the moral self and to a moral humanity. Hence, respect for the moral law and respect for the self that is a legislative self are two sides of one and the same coin. Moreover, to act out of respect for the moral law is to will oneself and others as legislative selves or members of the ideal order; it is to will the moral order of universal cooperation or humanity as it ought to be. This means that we ought to promote the highest good. In accordance with this, Kant emphasizes that the "harmony [of our actions] with humanity as an end in itself is only negative rather than positive if everyone does not also endeavor, so far as he can, to further the [personal] ends of others" (*Foundations*, p. 49; IV: 289).

We must interpret along the same lines the idea of treating humanity in oneself or others as a means only. To treat humanity in oneself as a means only is to deny that one ought to act on maxims that could function as universal laws in the moral order. This means to renounce that self in oneself which is a legislative self—that is, following Cohen, to act solely out of the empirical self with its narrow outlook. Since practical reason is universal, this also involves the denial of the possibility of the moral order; or, to put it otherwise, one constructs with the maxims of the empirical self the historical reality of this self, eliminating in one's construction the ideal world. Duties to oneself, then, are, in the final instance, duties to humanity. It is from this perspective that Kant's much better argument (as compared to his naturalistic argument) for the moral impermissibility of suicide is to be understood:

To destroy the subject of morality in one's person is to root out the existence of morality itself from the world, so far as this is in one's power; and yet morality is an end in itself. Consequently, to dispose of oneself as a mere means to an arbitrary end is to abase humanity in one's own person (*homo noumenon*), which was yet entrusted to man (*homo phaenomenon*) for its preservation.³⁰

Further, to treat humanity in other persons as a means only is to act contrary to the demand that we should create a society of legislators who seek to promote one another's personal ends. This idea has a critical implication, for most existing economic and po-

litical institutions aim only at the satisfaction of the ends of some of their participants and not all participants are legislative members. These institutions fail, therefore, to uphold the standards of practical reason. It follows that they must be changed in light of the moral ideal, and this shows in turn that the duty to promote the highest good is to be expounded as a social duty.

That the phrase 'humanity *in* a person' is not Kant's way of saying 'a human person' is also argued by Thomas E. Hill, Jr., in his recent paper "Humanity as an End in Itself."³¹ Hill claims that "Kant thought of humanity as a characteristic, or a set of characteristics, of persons (p. 85)." This set includes, among others, the capacity to act on hypothetical as well as unconditional principles, the power to set any end whatsoever, and the ability to understand the world. A similar view is put forward by John E. Atwell in his "Kant's Notion of Respect for Persons";³² Atwell emphasizes that "humanity" refers to those capacities which set human agents apart from nonrational animals. On both their accounts, to treat humanity as an end in itself is to strive to exercise and develop these capacities. Thus it is morally wrong to impair one's rational capacities or to destroy them, and one must develop one's talents. Likewise, with respect to others, one must enhance their use of reason rather than manipulate them by nonrational means, and one must support them in their pursuit of morally permissible ends.

Kant's reasoning often takes the form outlined by Atwell and Hill, in particular, in *Virtue*, and their interpretation is a succinct explication of what it means to say that the third formula demands "respect for persons." This does not, however, invalidate my interpretation. Rather, my interpretation encompasses theirs and, in addition, does justice to the social dimension in Kant's ethics. The realization of the moral order of legislators, or humanity as it ought to be, presupposes the use and fulfillment of typically human characteristics. Accordingly, the duty to promote the highest good includes and sheds new light upon the above duties which require us to exercise our own rational capacities and to enhance their development in others. But to strive for humanity as it ought to be also involves the demand to pursue the *institutional* preconditions for the development and exercise of these capacities. About this duty Atwell and Hill, but not Kant, remain silent.

The Remaining Formulas and Summary

The remaining formulas of the categorical imperative can be stated with relatively few comments. The fourth formula demands that the moral agent

. . . act only so that the will through its maxims could regard itself at the same time as universally lawgiving (*Foundations*, p. 52; IV: 292).

Kant states that this formula makes clear that "the will is . . . not only subject to the law but subject in such a way that it must be regarded also as self-legislative and only for this reason as being subject to the law (of which it can regard itself as the author)" (p. 49; 290). Hence, the fourth formula expresses the principle of *autonomy*. This principle is embedded in the formulas discussed previously. The difference is only a matter of emphasis, as is indicated by the fact that the self in the word 'autonomy' (the "law of the self") is the legislative or ideal self that accords with the idea of humanity or the moral order.³³ Autonomy, then, is not a given but a task, and heteronomy is determination or conditioning by laws that are not rationally produced (i.e., self-legislated). What is to be noted in addition is that these concepts are not merely "internal" ("private") concepts but also social concepts. Kant observes that "if reason will not subject itself to the law it gives itself, it will have to bow under the yoke of laws which others impose on it."³⁴ In other words, heteronomy is not merely being conditioned by the laws of the inclinations, but also being subject to the (arbitrary) will of others. Thus we can characterize existing social and political institutions as heteronomous, whereas the moral society is the autonomous society.

The fifth and sixth formulas also merely make explicit what is implied in the other formulas. These two formulas are, respectively, the *realm-of-ends formula* and its typic:

[E]very rational being must act as if he, by his maxims, were at all times a legislative member in the universal realm of ends (*Foundations*, p. 57; IV: 297).

[A]ll maxims which stem from autonomous legislation ought to harmonize with a possible realm of ends as with a realm of nature (p. 55; 295).

This realm is described as "a whole of all ends in systematic connection" (p. 51; 292). This systematic connection has the two aspects that within the realm of ends moral agents respect each other as legislators or as ends in themselves (i.e., everyone will uphold and promote the conditions of autonomy), and that they seek to enhance one another's personal ends. The realm of ends, then, is the moral order as a natural order, or humanity as it ought to be. Nonetheless, a new element comes into the picture. In my

explication of the highest good, or realm of ends, I have assumed that all rational beings that are part of this moral order are on an equal footing. Kant, however, holds that "[a] rational being belongs to the realm of ends as a member when he gives universal laws in it while also himself subject to these laws," and that "[h]e belongs to it as sovereign when he, as legislating, is subject to the will of no other" (p. 52; 292). The new element is easily explained, and supports my thesis that the grounding of the duty to promote the highest good is a central concern of the *Foundations*. It also illustrates the fact that two conceptions of the highest good are conflated in Kant's work: the realm of ends as a moral society in which human beings attempt to make one another happy, and the realm of ends as a moral order in which each individual is happy. For Kant goes on to state that the sovereign of the realm of ends is "a completely independent being without need and with power adequate to his will."³⁵ This divine being, we may suppose, is the same divine being of which Kant says that it must be postulated so as to affirm the tenability of the highest good as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness.

Kant summarizes his discussion of the different formulas of the categorical imperative in the *Foundations* with the statement that they are "only so many formulas of the very same law, and each of them unites the others in itself." He adds: "There is, nevertheless, a difference in them, but the difference is more subjectively than objectively practical, for it is intended to bring an idea of reason closer to intuition (by means of a certain analogy) and thus nearer to feeling."³⁶ My discussion has attempted to clarify this. The basic formulas demand that we adopt the standpoint of legislators in the moral order and thus seek this order; the typics help to explain what this legislation involves—that is, they bring the moral order closer to our intuition.

Another aspect of Kant's summary which is worth mentioning is that he says that all maxims have a form (universality), a material (human agents as ends in themselves), and a complete determination (consistency with the realm of ends as a realm of nature). The threefold division is derived from the first subdivision of the table of categories as developed in *Pure Reason*. The subdivision consists of the categories of quantity: unity, plurality, and totality. It follows that the purpose of the moral law as applied to the human condition is to make possible a unified plurality, a totality. The unity (the form) is the moral law. The plurality (the matter) consists of human agents and their individual ends. The former applied to the latter creates a moral totality (the complete deter-

mination), the moral society or highest good. This totality has two aspects corresponding to the two aspects of the plurality. Within the moral totality the human agents will respect one another as ends in themselves or as legislators, and they will seek to promote one another's personal ends. Finally, the very idea of the moral totality as a unified plurality shows that Kant did not intend to express totalitarian ideas with his view that the natural order can function as a model for the moral order; for what characterizes totalitarianism is that the universal does not truly unify the plurality, but negates it—the totality is without a plurality, and thus the individual is sacrificed in the name of the state, the party, etc.³⁷

Critical Notes and Conclusion

The moral society is the final end set by the moral law. The virtuous agent makes the moral law his own end, which means that this agent makes the moral society his own end as well. But does it follow that this agent will engage in active social duties? Why should he not limit his actions to respecting the autonomy of each individual and to enhancing their private ends? After all, Kant himself suggests in the closing section of *Lectures on Ethics* that if each of us behaves in this way the moral society will emerge. In short, it may still seem that the categorical imperative leads to private ethics, not to social ethics. To be sure, individual duties will now be fulfilled with the highest good as their end in view, but this difference from the private-ethics interpretation of Kant's practical philosophy does not transform his ethics into a social ethics.

Kant's reply would be that, since we cannot expect that universal virtue will arise in adverse sociopolitical conditions, the virtuous agent will see it as his task to change those conditions. That is to say, this agent will see it as his social duty to seek the perfect state and peace between the nations. This much is clear from my analysis of the section on Plato and the closing section of *Lectures on Ethics*. My discussion of the different formulas of the categorical imperative reinforces this conclusion: the person who obeys the moral law out of respect for this law will actively seek the conditions of universal autonomy, such as external freedom for all, and since the perfect state and international peace secure such freedom, this person will actively seek these ideal institutions. Thus there is a direct link between the categorical imperative and social ethics. I think, however, that this link can, and should be, strengthened on at least two grounds.

The first ground concerns the duty to promote a world in which individuals seek to enhance one another's ends. Kant does not consistently explore this demand for universal happiness as a social duty other than by maintaining that we must strive for ideal political institutions that make it possible, through universal external freedom, for each of us to engage in the pursuit of private ends and fulfill the duty of beneficence.³⁸ As we will see later in more detail, his mistake is that he assumes that within the contours of the perfect state, international peace, and a capitalist economy, the universal fulfillment of the duty of beneficence suffices for promoting universal happiness. This kind of good willing is not enough. Even if everyone were altruistic in this way, it remains the case that *institutional* efforts must be undertaken for the sake of the coordination and optimal realization of individual ends.³⁹ Moreover, the moral ideal of the realm of ends seems to express in the first place the demand that we transform all our institutions so that they *directly* aim at the satisfaction of the rational needs of all human beings. Thus we can further undercut the above argument connecting the categorical imperative with private ethics by the contention that it is *not* the case (contra Kant himself) that if everyone were to respect the autonomy of others and to fulfill the duty of beneficence the moral society would emerge of itself.

The second ground also breaks this tie and establishes an even stronger link between the categorical imperative and social ethics. This ground is that institutions are in a very direct sense required if we are to come to moral decisions that accord with the moral law. Lon L. Fuller states in *The Principles of Social Order*⁴⁰:

Today converging streams of ethical philosophy have nearly obliterated the notion of an institutional or procedural morality. Among the influences that join in this work of destruction we may mention such apparently diverse philosophies as utilitarianism, noncognitive and emotive theories of moral preference, and Kant's solitary ethical soliloquizer, impartially legislating for all mankind, including himself. What is lacking in all these philosophies is the simple picture of human beings confronting one another in some social context, adjusting their relations reciprocally, negotiating, voting, arguing before some arbiter, and perhaps even reluctantly deciding to toss for it.

We may wonder whether Fuller does not partly misinterpret what these theories see as one of their functions, namely, to offer guidelines for decisions made in an institutional setting. Certainly, Kant's moral theory explicitly offers such guidelines. Yet, what

seems to be the rational core of Fuller's contention is that moral rules cannot always be applied or decided upon in a monological fashion, but instead often require dialogical action.⁴¹ This means that we need free institutions—that is, institutions that permit and even promote moral dialogue—in order to come to decisions that accord with the moral law.

The insight is not lacking in Kant's work, but it is not sufficiently pronounced. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this. First, Kant contends that representative democracy is the best approximation of the perfect state. That is to say, this type of democracy offers us the best hope for laws that guarantee external freedom for all, and we may, moreover, see the right to vote as an instantiation of this freedom. Thus Kant seems to recognize that dialogical action is needed in order to come to a legal system that accords with the moral law. Political education, political action and discussion, the development of the awareness of conflicting interests, etc., are all aspects of the voting process. The testing of individual maxims, then, is not enough, even if it is universally performed, although it may be a truly indispensable aspect of the formation of political agreement. Accordingly, the virtuous agent will seek free institutions, not only because he views these as a precondition for the emergence of universal virtue, but also because he realizes that such institutions are essential for arriving at universal laws. Kant, however, does not take this step all the way. He limits the right to vote to economically independent male citizens and suggests that what really counts is not so much the form of the state (e.g., representative democracy or monarchy) as its mode of government; what in essence matters is that the decisions of the sovereign reflect the will of the people. This leads Kant to claim that a kingdom (temporarily, at least) is unobjectionable as long as the king legislates along representative lines.⁴² In other words, the ideal of the perfect state can be approximated by the conscientious ruler. This view is the logical outcome of the idea that maxims can be tested adequately in monological fashion; the virtuous ruler can determine which laws accord with the moral law. The need for free institutions is, in effect, undermined.

This first example can be extended from the legal/political realm to the socioeconomic realm. The scope of the second example is even more extensive. Kant emphatically claims that freedom of public expression of one's thought is required for human enlightenment. He argues forcefully for his case in the following passage from "What Is Orientation in Thinking?":

Certainly one may say, "Freedom to speak or write can be taken from us by a superior power, but never the freedom to think." But how much, and how correctly, would we think if we did not think as it were in common with others, with whom we mutually communicate! Thus one can well say that the external power which wrests from man the freedom publicly to communicate his thoughts also takes away the freedom to think—the sole jewel that remains to us under all civil repression and through which alone counsel against all the evils of that state can be taken (p. 303; IV: 363).

The relevance of freedom of public expression of one's thought is not limited to the legal/political realm. Communication is crucial not only for the formation of right political opinions but also for coming to right moral decisions in a variety of social and religious institutions. The same holds for the family, and repression of communication seems in general to darken our vision of our individual duties. Scientific and technological progress may also be placed on this list—that is, communication is a *sine qua non* for arriving at both empirical and moral truth. It follows that the virtuous agent will seek free institutions that make possible unrestricted communication for the sake of the moral law and its demands. But again we see that Kant undercuts the link between the categorical imperative and social ethics. He claims at times that the demands of the moral law are clear to any conscientious person; knowing what we ought to do is a question of virtue only.⁴³ This leads us, in effect, back to a monological ethics, weakening the case for social ethics.

Both grounds that I have offered for strengthening the link between social ethics and the categorical imperative point in the same direction. What Kant does not make sufficiently clear is that this imperative demands that we seek a society not of legislators but of *colegislators*. The ideal projected by the moral law must be understood as a society thoroughly democratic on all its institutional levels. (Perhaps on some levels representative democracy may substitute for direct democracy in order to come to terms with problems of magnitude and time arising from direct democracy on a large enough scale.) It is crucial to note, however, that the moral law places limiting conditions upon radical democracy and gives direction to such a democracy. The conditions of autonomy, such as external freedom and freedom of public expression as its derivative, must be safeguarded for each individual, and the final end in view of each institution must be the ends of all individuals, not only the ends of those who are its members.

These two grounds also are reasons (among others) for argu-

ing that an adequate social ethics must at some point go beyond Kant. We will reach this point in Part Two. It will also become clear there that the above sketch of the moral society as a society of colegislators is essentially the Cohenian moral ideal. Yet, much still is to be learned from Kant, and his vision is sufficiently close to this ideal (if not always factually, then logically) for us to take it as our guideline in the discussion of his work. In short, we can leave Kant's deviation from this ideal as a separate issue of concern.

In conclusion, then, the total end set by the moral law is the highest good, or moral society of colegislators, who uphold and promote the conditions of universal autonomy and enhance one another's personal ends. The moral ideal has four basic functions: it sets a historical and moral task; it is a totality concept that can integrate our single actions into a comprehensive and meaningful totality; it is a perspective from which existing institutions can be criticized as morally inadequate; and finally—and here we see a decisive break with consequentialist moral theories—the moral ideal places a restraining condition upon action toward the ideal in that this action must always seek to mirror that for which it strives.

4. The Highest Good and Individual Duties

My claim that Kant's ethics is a social ethics is not to be interpreted as a denial of the importance of individual duties, either in Kant's writings or in moral life. Morality cannot be limited to individual duties alone, but it would be equally mistaken to hold that our duties are limited to active social duties. The fact that we are bound by both types of duties is a source of moral dilemmas; for there are situations in which our individual and active social duties conflict with each other. I will not attempt to deal with this issue in my study, but instead will end this chapter by briefly explicating a conclusion that is implied by the previous analysis of the categorical imperative, namely that individual duties must also mirror the highest good. Yet it may be noted that this insight at least softens the possible conflict between individual duties and active social duties. Also, my explication implies a criticism of the "privatistic" understanding of individual duties.

Kant's social ethics, in contrast with his ethics interpreted as a private ethics, projects a morally perfect world as the ultimate aim of our moral action. This moral ideal, if not actually changing the content of individual duties as explicated in the private-ethics in-

terpretation, at least gives a new meaning to these duties. A good example is Kant's view of punishment. In accordance with his claim that punishment will no longer be necessary in the perfect state, Kant argues that teachers and parents ought not to punish children when they transgress the moral law. The perfect state makes possible moral autonomy and perfection; education must aim at the same end. Kant maintains that punishment is detrimental to this end:

If you punish a child for being naughty, and reward him for being good, he will do right merely for the sake of the reward; and when he goes out into the world and finds that goodness is not always rewarded, nor wickedness always punished, he will grow into a man who only thinks about how he may get on in the world, and does right or wrong according as he finds either of advantage to himself.⁴¹

A little further on, Kant sums up his view with the statement that "[i]f we wish to establish morality, we must abolish punishment." Instead of punishment, Kant argues, we must express strong disapproval and try to infuse respect for the moral law by instruction. [Kant also calls such disapproval "moral punishment," contrasting it with "physical punishment," which consists of the infliction of pain or the refusal to grant certain requests of the child (*ibid.*, pp. 87 ff; 493 ff).] Thus on the individual level we must attempt to establish the same end as on the sociopolitical level: the conditions of moral autonomy. Paraphrasing Kant, the guideline in moral instruction is that "if we wish to establish moral autonomy, we must treat children as (potentially) autonomous." Within the private-ethics interpretation the same conclusion may be drawn, but what is lacking is the broader context that moral instruction anticipates and mirrors the moral society, the highest good.

Other individual duties can be analyzed along the same lines, and in each case the result will be a criticism of the private-ethics interpretation of Kant as well as of the "privatistic" understanding of individual duties in general. Consider, for example, the duty to develop one's talents. It is often argued that Kant grounds this duty as follows. The maxim "I will fail to do anything needed to develop my talents" fails to pass the categorical-imperative test. The universal form of this maxim is "Everyone will fail to do anything needed to develop his talents," which is inconsistent with the fact that all rational agents set ends that they wish to obtain—that is, the pursuit of happiness. For rational beings will the means to their ends, and when no one develops his talents the means will

be lacking. It follows that it is not permissible to act on the maxim of neglecting to develop one's talents, and this implies that developing one's talents is an obligatory end. This kind of reasoning is typical of the private-ethics approach to the categorical imperative. To be sure, it represents an important aspect of the way Kant grounds the duty to develop one's talents, but the interpretation is one-sided and fails to do justice to the social dimension which is *also* present in his ethics. Kant appeals not only to self-interest, but also to the interest of humanity, as the logical basis of this duty. Kant writes that the failure to develop one's talents "might perhaps be consistent with the preservation of humanity as an end in itself but not with the furtherance of that end."⁴⁵ We may reconstruct his argument as follows. We have noted that Kant holds that cultural progress facilitates the realization of the highest good. Thus to develop one's talents is an obligatory end, because the universalized maxim "Everyone will fail to do anything needed to develop his talents" is inconsistent with the idea of cultural progress and, hence, with the idea of promoting the highest good. Or, more positively, the virtuous moral agent who wills to develop his own talents wills that everyone develop his talents; he wills not only the cultural facilitation of his own moral improvement but cultural progress in general as a step toward the moral improvement of humanity and the corresponding happiness. And, obviously, in this particular case the highest good gives not only a new meaning to our individual duties but also a different content. Private ethics steers the development of one's talents toward individual gain, whereas social ethics aims additionally at the social good.

These two examples should suffice to make clear that the highest good as a social duty implies a broadened understanding of our individual duties. These duties must mirror the moral ideal, and in this manner their fulfillment will contribute to the realization of this ideal. Another important difference between the two ways of looking at individual duties is that only the social-ethics approach is likely to do justice to the fact that a satisfactory fulfillment of these duties depends on numerous institutional conditions. We have seen that free institutions that permit public expression of one's thought are important for the recognition of what our individual duties are in the first place. Turning again to the duty to develop one's talents, we can detect other such conditions. The fulfillment of this duty presupposes adequate economic conditions, a school system accessible to all, and again freedom from censorship, to mention only a few of the institutional prere-

quisites. The realization of these prerequisites remains an ongoing task. Similar observations can be made with respect to other individual duties, such as helping others in need. What if one lacks the means? Or what if the cause of distress is a corrupt political order? As we will see in the next chapter, Kant argues that the ability to fulfill the duty of beneficence depends on the possession of property which is itself largely the product of unjust political relations.⁴⁶ The irony that emerges is that those who are able to fulfill this duty do not deserve moral praise for doing so because their wealth is unjustly acquired, whereas those who rightly could receive moral praise for fulfilling the duty of beneficence lack the means for practicing it. The irony has a critical edge: individual duties point to active social duties. Conjoining this insight with the thesis that individual duties, properly understood, contribute to the realization of the moral society, we come to the conclusion that, from the perspective of Kant's social ethics, individual duties and active social duties are in the end complementary.

CHAPTER II

Moral Commitment and the Limits of Human Action

Kant's social ethics projects a moral ideal, the community of co-legislators, or highest good, and declares that it is our duty to transform the world in light of this ideal. To engage in such activity is often, if not always, to fight against the odds, and, hence, it presupposes on the side of the moral agent a strong moral commitment to his cause. Partly basing myself on Kant's ethical and historical writings, I will discuss in the first section below three emotive components of this commitment: moral indignation about present social conditions, moral enthusiasm engendered by progressive historical events, and solidarity with the victims of repression. In addition, I will show that, although Kant did not use his theory of moral feeling to explain the genesis of these specific moral feelings, his theory can be fruitfully used for this purpose. Accordingly, I will open this section by examining this theory.

In the second section I will focus on the ambiguity embedded in Kant's notion of the highest good which we have encountered in the previous chapter. Is this good to be defined as a moral society in which human agents attempt to make one another happy, but do not necessarily succeed, or should we define it as the union of universal virtue and universal happiness? The latter conception of the highest good predominates in Kant's work and leads to the postulate about God. Arguing that "human capacity does not suf-

fice for bringing about happiness in the world proportionate to worthiness to be happy [i.e., virtue]" (*Religion*, p. 7n; VI: 146n). Kant claims that, in order to make tenable the duty to promote the highest good, we must assume a supreme cause of nature, a divine being that harmonizes nature with the moral intention. Contrary to Kant, I will contend that the argument concerning the limits of human action does not show that a divine being must be postulated; rather, it indicates that the other conception of the highest good which we find in his work is the proper conception. I will argue that Kant failed to draw this conclusion because he confused the demands of morality (we ought to promote universal happiness) with those of desire (each individual ought to be happy in the moral society). My point of departure in this section will be the antinomy of practical reason, as explicated in the second *Critique*.

In the third and final section of this chapter I will briefly discuss the broader context in which the antinomy of practical reason is to be placed: moral faith. This faith encompasses the hope that the victims of injustice will be redeemed and that our moral actions will not be in vain in a world which seems so alien to our moral endeavors. Hope is a fourth emotive aspect of the moral commitment to change the world. My conclusion will be that this hope, to the extent that it can be philosophically justified, is to be grounded in the idea of historical progress. To provide such justification is a central concern of Kant's historical writings, to which I will turn in the three remaining chapters of Part One.

1. Moral Feelings in the Context of Social Ethics

Respect for the Moral Law and the Idea of Autonomy

The pursuit of the objects of desire offers a "promise of happiness." The moral law does not offer such a promise, and Kant claims, moreover, that any act motivated by this promise lacks moral worth. To have moral worth an act must be performed for the reason that it is the right act to do; thus it must be done for the sake of duty, not from inclination. How are such virtuous acts possible for human beings as sensuous beings? Kant's answer is that the moral law provides its own incentive, i.e., respect for the law, and that human agents as beings with a free will (*Willkür*) are

able to subordinate sensuous incentives to the moral one. This answer, in turn, poses another question: How can the moral law create such moral incentive? It is this question primarily that Kant's theory of moral feeling seeks to address.

Kant holds that our awareness of the moral law, or consciousness of our duty, is accompanied by a feeling of respect for this law. He analyzes the genesis of this moral feeling along the following lines. The moral law has a constraining effect upon our propensity to let the inclinations rule our actions. More specifically, this law shatters the conceited belief that the maxims of self-love or our own happiness can function as practical laws. What strikes down our self-conceit humiliates us. Kant states: "Now if the idea of something as the determining ground of the will humiliates us in our self-consciousness, it awakens respect for itself so far as it is positive and the ground of determination." He adds that "[t]he moral law, therefore, is . . . a cause of respect" (*Practical Reason*, p. 77; V: 82–83). On Kant's account, however, it would be a mistake to interpret the esteem that the law effects in us merely negatively as fear of a power that humbles us and pulls us to a painful constraint on the inclinations. Kant argues that "since this constraint is exercised only through the legislation of one's own reason, it also contains something elevating, and the subjective effect on feeling, in so far as pure practical reason is its sole cause, can also be called self-approbation with reference to pure practical reason" (*ibid.*, p. 83; 89). Respect for the moral law, then, also has a positive component. In experiencing a painful constraint of the inclinations we become aware that we can act on principle and can be our own cause, as opposed to being conditioned by sensuous feelings. In this way the moral law meets with our approval; it points to our higher vocation of autonomous action, and in positively esteeming the law we positively esteem our moral or legislative self.

That the moral law puts us down and also elevates us reflects the fact that we are both moral and sensuous beings.¹ From the perspective of sensuous nature and its longing for happiness, the demands of the moral law are experienced as requiring a painful constraint, and we feel humbled in our inadequacy to live up to these demands. But from the perspective of moral reason and its interests, these feelings are approved, for they show that pure practical reason is effective—that is, the law is recognized as binding. Thus these feelings signify our capacity to act out of the moral law and lead to the experience of elevation. To put the issue otherwise, the human agent as an empirical self feels humiliated by the

projected ideal self, the noumenal self, in light of which his moral shortcomings and imperfections are emphasized, but, at the same time, he feels elevated in that he is a being who is guided by such an ideal self, and this is the source of his dignity.²

Kant was well aware that the manner in which respect for the law is experienced varies with the situation and with the individual involved, as is manifest in his description of this rational feeling, which ranges from a sense of duty, or feeling compelled by the law, to awe and reverence, emotions closely akin to religious feeling and our experience of the sublime. He emphasizes, however, that all human beings feel respect for the law to some degree; they all have what in *Virtue* he calls "moral feeling." This feeling is defined as "our susceptibility to feel pleasure [*Lust*] or pain [*Unlust*] merely from being aware that our actions are consistent with or contrary to the law of duty."³ Kant asserts in *Virtue*:

No man is entirely without moral feeling, for were he completely lacking in capacity for it he would be morally dead. And if (to speak in medical terms) the moral life-force could no longer excite this feeling, then humanity would dissolve (by chemical laws, as it were) into mere animality and be mixed irrevocably with the mass of other natural beings (p. 60; VII: 210).

Accordingly, Kant argues here that there is no duty to have or acquire moral feeling but only a duty to cultivate or strengthen that feeling. One way this can be accomplished is by reading and discussing examples of individuals who have chosen to do their duty in the face of the greatest hardship or temptation.⁴ The recognition that their actions were motivated by the moral law creates in us a positive appreciation for the law, making us more susceptible to the moral feeling that this law effects in us when we consider whether our own maxims are consistent with or contrary to it. (My use of the term 'moral feeling', it may be noted, accords with Kant's in that he uses this term to refer both to our capacity for moral feeling and to the feeling itself. Cf. Beck, *Commentary*, p. 224).

Kant explicates the pleasure (*Lust*) aspect of moral feeling in terms of "contentment" and "peace of soul." He writes:

When the reflective man has overcome the incentives to vice and is conscious of having done his often painful duty, he finds himself in a state which could well be called happiness, a state of contentment and peace of soul in which virtue is its own reward (*Virtue*, p. 34; VII: 185).

This moral well-being or satisfaction is not to be equated with happiness as such. In the second *Critique*, Kant says that “self-contentment” is the best word to describe this kind of satisfaction, because it “does not indicate a gratification, as ‘happiness’ does” (p. 122; V: 128). Here he also distinguishes between the two feelings in terms of “intellectual contentment” and “sensuous contentment,” stressing their different origins. Further, Kant thought that the happy immoral life is, finally, not worth living, but he did not make the opposite mistake of praising the moral life so that happiness becomes irrelevant. For Kant the good life is not a life of inner satisfaction in a world of chaos. Rather, it requires the complete transformation of our social and natural environment; for only if that occurs can we rationally hope that virtue and happiness will meet, not just for ourselves, but for all human beings.

Moral feeling and respect for the moral law are essentially the same feeling, although Kant emphasizes in his analysis under the term ‘respect’ the humiliation of the empirical self, whereas under the term ‘moral feeling’ he stresses instead the pleasure and joy of moral praxis (cf. Beck, *Commentary*, p. 224). To explicate, the elevating feeling that accompanies awareness that we can act on maxims consistent with the law is a pleasant rational feeling, and the virtuous agent who acts on such maxims affirms and strengthens this feeling, setting aside, but still experiencing, the sensuous pain that arises from thwarting the inclinations. This agent also still feels the humbling of the phenomenal self, but recognizes it as a self-imposed feeling and so uses this feeling to support his resolve to fulfill his duties and to bridge the gap between the empirical and the ideal self. The immoral person takes the opposite road; he turns his back on the elevating feeling, as it were, weakening the effects of the moral law on his sensible nature, and opts instead for maxims that enhance his sensuous feelings. Yet, as long as he has not completely abnegated his moral personhood, he feels moral dissatisfaction amid the pleasure he derives from satisfying the inclinations, for he is still aware that he has denied his higher vocation and that his maxims cannot function as practical laws—that is, the moral law continues to humiliate him and to pull him to higher ground.

To act out of respect for the moral law, then, is to act (at least partly) out of a feeling of satisfaction with the law. It is to act out of contentment with oneself insofar as one is a legislative self. This poses the following problem. Is moral satisfaction the reason for obedience to the demands of the moral law? If so, human autonomy appears to be an illusion. The eudaemonist argues that moral

satisfaction is indeed the ground for acting virtuously. Kant replies:

[T]he pleasure [*Lust*] that must precede our obedience to the law in order for us to act in conformity with the law is pathological, and our conduct follows the *order of nature* [and, hence, is heteronomous]; but the kind of pleasure that can only be felt when the law precedes it, is in the *moral order*.—If we fail to observe this distinction, and take as our basic principle *eudaemonism* (the happiness principle) instead of *eleutheronomy* (the freedom principle of inner legislation), we effect the *euthanasia* (painless death) of all morals (*Virtue*, p. 35; VII: 186; translation altered).

Thus moral satisfaction does not undermine autonomy, because it is the effect of taking the moral law as the determining ground of the will. Logically speaking, this satisfaction can be felt only *after* the law is recognized as valid for all rational beings, and the affirmation and strengthening of this feeling results from acting in accord with the demands of the law. The eudaemonist, then, errs in his etiology of moral satisfaction, for this satisfaction does not condition the choice for the moral law, but is conditioned by the choice for this law. The eudaemonist wishes to explain that which cannot be explained without a contradiction in terms: freedom of the will. We can explain *how* sensuous beings can act out of a pure practical principle—the answer is: through the existence of the moral incentive—, but we cannot explain *why* they opt for doing so—it is a question of freedom of the will. Kant comments: “These people [such as the eudaemonists] are dedicated to the omnipotence of theoretical reason, and the discomfort they feel at not being able to *explain* what lies entirely beyond the sphere of physiological explanation (*freedom of the will*; *Willkür*) provokes them to a general *call to arms*, as it were, to withstand that idea, no matter how exalting this very prerogative of man—his capacity for such an *idea*—may be” (*ibid.*; 186–87; translation altered).

Kant is, in general, critical of feelings that condition our obedience to the moral law, including those “natural feelings” which incline us to fulfill some of our obligations. He states that “[e]ven the feeling of sympathy and warm-hearted fellow feeling, when *preceding* the consideration of what is duty and serving as a determining ground, is burdensome even to right-thinking persons, confusing their considered maxims and creating the wish to be free from them and subject only to law-giving reason” (*Practical Reason*, p. 123; V: 128–29; my emphasis). Kant somewhat overstates his case here, inviting the familiar criticism that he distorts moral

practice by failing to recognize the positive role of benevolent feelings in such practice and by making it joyless and harsh (see also Beck, *Commentary*, p. 231). His main point, however, is well taken. Benevolent feelings are not always in accord with our duties and may misguide us in the determination of where our duties lie. What is morally required, then, is the ethicization of human nature. On Kant's account, once benevolent feelings are brought into accord with the moral law, they can facilitate our obedience to the law, i.e., cooperate with the moral incentive and enrich our moral life, although Kant seems to have held that the greatest joy of moral life is rooted in the experience of autonomous action as such.

A. Murray MacBeath in "Kant on Moral Feeling"⁵ raises a more important objection to Kant's theory of moral feeling, arguing that Kant mistakenly assumes that human beings always need an incentive in order to act in accord with the moral law. Rejecting the thesis that reason alone cannot move us to action, MacBeath claims that a consistent defense of this thesis implies that "every kind of reason for action will have to prompt the agent to action by means of a feeling." He continues: "This is not only far-fetched: it is also at odds with our normal use of the word 'feeling', in which feelings cannot be unfelt—at odds, I say, because I at least am not conscious of any particular feeling which accompanies all my acts of rational choice, and these feelings, if I have them, must therefore be unfelt" (p. 310). MacBeath proposes on this ground that we reformulate Kant's criterion of morally praiseworthy acts: an act has moral worth when one's reason for performing it is a good moral reason. Thus Kant's notion of autonomous acts can be upheld without reference to the feeling of respect, and it is the possibility of this reformulation, I presume, that is the basis of MacBeath's remarkable closing statement that "what is so astonishing [about Kant's theory of moral feeling] is that . . . a theory so breathtakingly absurd, should prove as rewarding as it does" (p. 314).

It is to be granted, I think, that we do not always act out of some particular feeling, say, whenever we tell the truth in a (seemingly) spontaneous manner, although we may have good moral reasons for performing such unreflective acts. Moreover, it seems that we do not always act out of some particular feeling when we base our actions on consideration of moral reasons—for example, when after some reflection we opt for telling a lie in a given situation so as to prevent harm to some individual. Contrary to MacBeath, however, I hold that these observations do not show that Kant's theory of moral feeling is thoroughly misguided. They

indicate, rather, that his theory is in need of further specification to make clear that the moral incentive is indispensable only in the formation and continuation of our preparedness to guide our conduct by moral reasons. My view, in other words, is that respect for the moral law is essential only in the development and affirmation of a good character or moral disposition. Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* is helpful in clarifying this claim and even seems to confirm it.

Kant argues here that a person has a good character when he has firmly adopted the "maxim of holiness" —that is, the resolve to subordinate sensuous nature and its longing for happiness to moral reason and its law (see pp. 42–44; VI: 186–87). For Kant such a dispositional act (or what he calls the "grounding of a character") consists of—and is possible only through—the subordination of sensuous motives to the moral incentive. The virtuous person, then, has respect for the moral law built into his character, or basic motivational structure, and seeks to perform his individual acts in accordance with the maxim of holiness. This does not mean that he always succeeds in upholding this standard, nor does it mean that all his virtuous acts are accompanied by a feeling of respect for the law. Instead, two other conclusions should be drawn. First, since the virtuous person *is* human and since holiness as the complete pacification of human nature sets an infinite task, this person must from time to time reaffirm his resolve to act out of the maxim of holiness. Moments of great hardship or temptation will "test" his basic moral intention, and the feeling of respect for the law is needed as an incentive to continue his (steady) progress toward the ideal of holiness. Second, it is meaningful to say that even the "unfelt" moral acts of the virtuous person, whether they are (seemingly) spontaneous or based on moral deliberation, are done out of respect for the moral law and thus have moral worth; for these actions, we may assume, are rooted in his moral disposition of satisfaction with the law (i.e., the maxim of holiness is the ultimate ground of his other maxims). The virtuous person himself is the best judge of this, for he can attempt retroactively to recapture his basic moral intention. What may be noted, though, is that there seems to be in general no good reason to engage in such introspection at every point. Self-examination, both before and after the performance of our moral acts, has a significant place in moral life, but we should also learn to act directly on the basis of moral rules and practices which we have made our own through respect for the moral law.

The upshot is that, on my account, Kant is not necessarily

committed to the thesis that MacBeath ascribes to him (although he may in fact have held it) and that his criterion of morally praiseworthy acts need not be fundamentally changed. Kant's mistake seems to be that he often describes the moral life in such a way as to suggest that our very commitment to the moral law and, hence, to guiding our conduct by moral reasons, is at stake in every moral act—although in his defense it may again be noted that he views respect for the law as a feeling that varies with the situation and the individual involved. MacBeath, however, seems to make the more serious opposite mistake of failing to recognize that we encounter conditions under which our very commitment to the law is "tested"; for, when this happens, it indeed seems that moral feeling is needed to move us along the arduous road toward the good.

The real problem with Kant's theory of moral feeling, I propose, is not that it postulates some superfluous moral feeling, but that it is limited in scope through failing to incorporate the social dimension that, I have argued, is present in the categorical imperative. His theory, in other words, does not address the emotive effects of integrating the highest good into one's life-plan and of making this good the end of one's social actions. As will soon become clear, the notion of respect for the moral law does not adequately describe these effects. This is hardly surprising, because Kant seems chiefly to have linked this notion with individual duties, as is indicated by his claim that all human beings feel respect for the law to some degree. After all, it is plausible to hold that everyone recognizes some individual duties as binding, but the same cannot be said of active social duties, and, certainly, there is no universal recognition of, or agreement upon, the idea that the social totality ought to be changed in light of some moral ideal such as the highest good.

My main concern in the rest of this section is to analyze some emotive components of what I have earlier referred to as the moral commitment to change the world in light of the highest good. Kant's practical writings offer valuable suggestions for discerning several emotive aspects of this commitment: moral indignation and moral enthusiasm may be seen as social analogues of, respectively, the negative and positive components of respect for the moral law, whereas solidarity may be seen as a social version of "natural sympathy." Moreover, the two former "social" feelings are mentioned, though not investigated, in his historical writings. Before proceeding with my analysis, however, it is necessary to deal once

again with the autonomy/heteronomy issue, now as it relates to moral commitment and its final objective, the highest good.

Moral Commitment and the Idea of Autonomy

It is often pointed out in the literature on Kant's practical work that his doctrine of the personal highest good, which states that it is rational for the individual to hope that his virtuous behavior will bring him happiness, raises the problem of heteronomy. The problem is that autonomy is surrendered when this hope conditions the individual's obedience to the demands of the moral law. At first sight, it may seem that no similar problem arises with regard to the highest good as a social duty. Yirmiahu Yovel argues in his *Kant and the Philosophy of History* not only that Kant's theory of motives can take care of the heteronomy problem but also that Kant can rely on the point that "the realization of the highest good is an infinitely remote ideal, and man is aware of it." Yovel adds: "[This agent] acts, then, with the knowledge that his goal of universal happiness is not a personal interest but a universal world order, to be established by the cumulative work of generations" (p. 68). The difficulty with this argument is that it neglects the fact that one's personal happiness may be involved in the small incremental steps toward the highest good. To be generally practical, the pursuit of the highest good as a social duty must be seen as including intermediate goals toward this final end, and one's own well-being may be at stake in the pursuit of these goals. To use an example provided by Allen W. Wood in *Kant's Moral Religion*,⁶ consider a person living in a slum and fighting against unjust and poor housing conditions to which he and his neighbors are subjected. Suppose that his efforts pay off. This means that the reformer gains in personal happiness, i.e., improved housing conditions for himself, and one might argue on this ground that the highest good as a social duty is inconsistent with the idea of autonomy. The objection in this case seems even stronger than with regard to the personal highest good, for one's personal happiness now appears not merely as an object of hope but as an object of moral action.⁷ Thus it seems that the very notion of moral commitment is heteronomous.

Wood has shown convincingly that the charge of heteronomy results from confusing a motive of an action with its end (see pp. 49ff). It is assumed that, once an empirical end such as happiness becomes a moral (i.e., obligatory) end, it also becomes a motive. The logical outcome of this assumption is that practical rea-

son cannot prescribe any end whatever except purity of intention. Practical reason thus becomes merely restrictive; its task is only to conform the pursuit of private ends to universal law. Kant, to the contrary, holds that practical reason specifies a variety of obligatory ends—ends that are duties. The highest good comprises the entirety of all moral ends and is, accordingly, the total object of the pure will. But, as Kant argues in *Practical Reason*, “it is still not to be taken as the *determining ground* of the pure will; the moral law alone must be seen as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion the object of the pure will” (p. 113; V: 119). In other words, the autonomous agent ignores the whole issue of whether he happens to desire certain aspects of the highest good or its intermediate ends, such as his own happiness or that of others. That is, his choosing to promote this good is not determined by the lower faculty of desire, i.e., the inclinations; rather, his ground for making this end the object of his will is the moral law. Kant also puts it as follows. The autonomous will is determined by the legislative form of a maxim, not by its matter or object. This means that the virtuous person wills the highest good because of its form—it is a *universal* end. The same can be said of the intermediate goals toward the highest good. Hence, the willing of this virtuous person is rationally produced, not sensibly conditioned; it is autonomous willing.

At times Kant’s statements seem to conflict with this analysis. In *Religion* he asserts that “man seeks something he can *love*; therefore the law, which merely arouses his *respect*, even though it does not acknowledge this object of love as a necessity does yet extend itself on its behalf by including the moral goal of reason [the highest good] among its determining grounds” (pp. 6–7n; VI: 145n). Moreover, Kant states in *Virtue* that obligatory ends are material determining grounds of the will, again making the highest good a determining ground of the will.⁸ Kant should have been more careful here, but, once his meaning is understood, there is no serious problem. A crucial thesis of his ethics is that the supreme principle of morality must not, and cannot, be defined in terms of the good, but that the good must be defined in terms of this principle. The first way of proceeding leads to heteronomy, for one’s obedience to a moral law is conditioned by one’s desire for the good. This procedure also excludes the formulation of the supreme principle of morality, a universal principle, because of the great variety of human desires. Hence Kant’s insistence, in the *Analytic of Practical Reason*, that no object should be the determining ground of the will and that the supreme principle of morality

can only be a formal law, i.e., *the* moral law. However, once the moral law is firmly established and the object adequate to it is found—the highest good as comprising all moral ends—it becomes innocuous, although not very precise, to claim that the highest good is the determining ground of the will. For now the object that determines the will does not precede the law, but follows from it. The claim is imprecise because the highest good determines the will not directly, but indirectly, since it is mediated by the moral law.

The idea of moral commitment, then, is consistent with the notion of autonomy. What makes this commitment autonomous is that the highest good is a social ideal projected by the moral law, an ideal in light of which it is obligatory to change the present social situation. Thus the decision of the morally committed person to engage in social action is based not on his inclinations but on his conviction that the world is unjust. To be sure, this person probably is attracted to the highest good and its intermediate ends and repelled by the present social condition—for instance, the reformer of Wood's example presumably will cherish the prospect of better housing for himself and his neighbors and feel appalled by the poor housing conditions—but this does not undermine his autonomy as long as these feelings do not condition his decision to seek change. Alternatively, it may be that these feelings arise from, and are conditioned by, his choice to make the highest good the end of his will—they are autonomous feelings. I will now explore this alternative. I might add that this exploration may be seen in part as a suggestive explication of Kant's contention, in the above quote from *Religion*, that the highest good is an object of love, whereas the law is only an object of respect.

Moral Indignation

That respect for the law does fail to capture the emotive aspects of the moral commitment to change the world becomes clear when one compares the genesis of respect with the genesis of this commitment (insofar as it is a feeling). The latter, in contrast to the former, cannot be explained in individualistic terms. For what produces this commitment is not primarily that the moral law humiliates the individual in his inclination to let desire rule his conduct, but that this law upholds an image of a morally perfect world—an ideal society—in light of which the present state of affairs must be described as deplorable. Thus the genesis of moral commitment is mediated by a social dimension which is absent in Kant's descrip-

tion of the genesis of respect. Accordingly, it seems that this commitment comprises a feeling of *moral indignation* about the world which cannot be found in the internal ("private") interaction between the moral law and human desire. (I will also use the term *moral anger* to describe this feeling; this term better captures the intensity of the moral feeling I have in mind, but the disadvantage of using it is that it suggests temporality and lack of control.) Kant hinted at this feeling when he wrote in "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" that

[o]ne cannot suppress a certain indignation when one sees men's actions on the great world-stage and finds, beside the wisdom here and there among individuals, everything in large woven together from folly, childish vanity, even from childish malice and destructiveness (p. 12; IV: 152).

It is also this moral indignation, I suggest, that brought Kant to make the often-cited statement that "from such crooked wood as man is made of, nothing perfectly straight can be built (*ibid.*, pp. 17–18; 158). Yet Kant did not discuss this feeling in his moral writings proper, and in his historical writings it is merely mentioned.

The foregoing indicates that moral indignation about the present state of affairs is the social analogue of respect for the law in its negative component. The humiliation embedded in respect for the moral law is conjoined with a feeling of dissatisfaction with oneself insofar as one is a sensibly conditioned or heteronomous self. This dissatisfaction is rooted in the experience of one's own shortcomings in light of the ideal self, the legislative self. The social analogue of such dissatisfaction with oneself is moral dissatisfaction or anger with the world and present humanity, prompted by the moral inadequacy of present social conditions as compared with the highest good and humanity as it ought to be, ideal humanity.

Both feelings of dissatisfaction have a place within an adequate Kantian social ethics, but moral anger or indignation must receive more emphasis than personal moral dissatisfaction. This is implied by Kant's thesis that moral progress is blocked by corrupt sociopolitical conditions and that universal moral perfection is to be expected only in a situation of international peace and perfect states. Thus the burden must shift. The individual should not carry on his shoulders all the weight of guilt and dissatisfaction with himself arising from his imperfections; part of this weight, if not most of it, should be placed upon his sociopolitical environment. What is to be recognized, then, is that the internal conflict between moral reason and its law, on the one hand, and the inclinations, on

the other hand, reflects social conflict and that social conflict intensifies it. This does not exclude moral responsibility—notice that Kant says that corrupt sociopolitical conditions *block* moral progress, not that these conditions directly *cause* an immoral disposition—and, moreover, it must be taken into account that we are not all alike victims of injustice. (Witness Kant's trust in the basic moral decency of ordinary persons—following Rousseau—and his sharp and biting criticism of the “politicians.”⁹)

An additional reason for emphasizing moral indignation rather than individual moral dissatisfaction is that the former feeling seems more effective for the development of the moral self than the latter feeling. Moral indignation inspires social action, and, ideally, such action is a cooperative activity, reflecting the moral society and the legislative self. Provided that social action approximates this ideal, it will be conducive to the cultivation of cooperative values and, hence, to the development of the moral disposition. Moreover, social action may even be necessary for the affirmation or continuation of the moral self; for resistance to oppression may be a precondition for regaining or upholding self-esteem and dignity which are lost or threatened in arbitrary treatment, political violence, and other processes of dehumanization.¹⁰ From the perspective of a viable Kantian social ethics, then, the saying “Improve the world, start with yourself” is to be reversed: “Improve yourself, start with the world.”¹¹

The anger of moral reason should not be confused with what may be called the “anger of oppressed human nature.” Moral anger is a rational feeling; it is moral pain of a social nature which goes hand in hand with the conviction that changes in present conditions are imperative and can be undertaken in light of some moral ideal. The *anger of oppressed human nature*, on the contrary, emerges when no alternative to the conditions of oppression is recognized other than a mere negation of the existing state of affairs. Continuous oppression and denial of legitimate human needs lead under these circumstances to an anger which is bound to erupt in uncontrolled destruction and violence. This anger of oppressed human nature should not be too easily condemned. To be sure, it should be censured, but the task is also to understand the social factors that promote such anger and to promulgate this knowledge, so that the anger can be transformed (ethicized) into moral indignation and organized social action. This underscores the importance of morality for social action. The anger of oppressed human nature by itself will not lead to collective action

aimed at social change. However, if the moral ideal is not from the very beginning upheld as a standard and guide for collective action, this anger may play a role in the struggle for social improvement, and the result may be that the circle of oppression is continued—the internalized structural violence of the old society becomes the structural violence of the new society. In accordance with my later critique of Marx, it may be noted that these observations conflict both with Marx's view that morality is superfluous for social action and with his claim that ethical socialists pursued social change in vain when the time was not yet "ripe" for doing so. Social action in its various expressions and forms should be judged not only in terms of its "outer" success, but also in terms of what it may effect with regard to "inner" change. Certainly, it is imperative that the anger of oppressed human nature be either prevented or else transformed into the rational politics of moral indignation.

That a certain indignation—e.g., the anger of protest and of standing on one's rights—often accompanies or impels social action refutes the common notion that such action is usually motivated by *mere* self-interest. (The fact that in some cases the anger of oppressed human nature is also visible does not undermine my thesis. The two types of anger are altogether different in their expression; moreover, the anger of oppressed nature is not mediated by reason and so can be understood neither as motivated by moral reasons nor as motivated by self-interest.) What disproves this common notion is that the indignation embedded in social action emerges only when, on the basis of some moral ideal, the given social totality is perceived as lacking moral authority; just as respect arises only when, on the basis of the moral law, it is recognized that the maxims of self-love cannot function as practical laws—that is, that our inclinations as such lack moral authority. Thus even social action with a limited end in view, reflecting the self-interest of its participants, may be interpreted as morally motivated action provided that the participants feel indignant about not receiving what they consider to be their due. One may hesitate to call this sense of injustice "moral anger," but, just as respect admits of degrees, so moral anger, too, takes on different forms. This anger varies with the gap between the projected ideal and the actual situation. Kant holds that "[n]othing is more reprehensible than to derive the laws prescribing what *ought to be done* from what *is done*, or to impose upon them the limits by which the latter is circumscribed" (*Pure Reason*, p. 313; III: 259). His ethics, therefore, is an ethics of *radical* moral anger.

Moral Enthusiasm

We have seen that moral commitment has as its negative component a feeling of strong moral dissatisfaction with the world, but, like respect for the moral law, it has a corresponding positive component as well. Just as the virtuous person may derive moral pleasure from individual acts that accord with the moral law, so the commitment to change the world may be accompanied by *moral enthusiasm*, inspired by those historical events which intimate that humanity is taking a moral interest in the highest good or its intermediate ends. This does not mean that moral pleasure may not also result from this commitment; my point is, of course, to emphasize here precisely those feelings which differentiate moral commitment (as a feeling) from respect. Likewise, we should not exclude the possibility that this commitment involves social acts done out of a sense of duty, constraining the inclinations, or out of moral reasons as such. What we may suppose, though, is that morally committed persons are susceptible to moral indignation and moral enthusiasm, just as Kant claims that all human beings have moral feeling, and that these "social" feelings are conducive to the development and continuation of the commitment to change the world, this in rough analogy to the role played by respect in the formation and affirmation of good character.

Kant displayed moral enthusiasm in word and spirit after the French Revolution, notably in his "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?," Part Two of *The Strife of the Faculties* (1798). His main purpose there is to "predict" future progress, so as to support moral praxis aimed at the highest good. His argument is that, if a certain historical event signifies that the human race is morally concerned with improving its situation (i.e., a "moral cause" is operative in humanity), then we can predict progress, because we may assume, first of all, that sooner or later conditions will emerge similar to those which gave rise to this progressive historical event and, second, that, when this happens, the moral cause will again lead to efforts directed toward societal improvement (see "An Old Question," section 5). Kant argues that the enthusiasm the French Revolution engendered among its spectators shows that such a moral cause is, indeed, operative in humanity:

The revolution of a gifted people which we have seen unfolding in our day may succeed or miscarry; it may be filled with misery and atrocities to the point that a sensible man, were he boldly to hope to execute it successfully the second time, would never resolve to make the experiment

at such cost—this revolution, I say, nonetheless finds in the hearts of all spectators (who are not engaged in this game themselves) a *wishful participation* that borders closely on enthusiasm, the very expression of which is fraught with danger; this sympathy, therefore, can have no other cause than a moral predisposition in the human race (*ibid.*, p. 144; VII: 398; my emphasis).

Kant continues to state that the moral cause at work here consists of two elements, reflecting two aims that the French Revolution pursued, namely, the right to self-determination of the people and the ideal of the republican state. He emphasizes the significance of the latter aim, arguing that this obligatory end “establishes the condition whereby war (the source of all evil and corruption of morals) is deterred.” Thus if the moral importance of this end for humanity is widely recognized, as the enthusiasm of the spectators seems to confirm, and if we assume that conditions favorable to change will sooner or later occur again, we can infer that “progress toward the better is assured humanity . . . , for it is at least left undisturbed in its advance [toward the highest good].” Kant concludes on this ground that the enthusiasm of the spectators makes clear that “genuine enthusiasm always moves only toward what is ideal, and, indeed, to what is purely moral, such as the concept of right, and it cannot be grafted onto self-interest.”¹²

Kant's remarks here support some of the theses I have earlier defended. The republican state sets an end which is a duty, and the universal realization of this end and the ensuing international peace eliminate an impediment to moral progress. What is most striking about his remarks, however, is that he addresses the enthusiasm of the spectators of the French Revolution, not the enthusiasm that lived among its initiators. Or, more broadly, Kant attempts to detect the “moral predisposition in the human race” not through investigating the behavior of the revolutionaries, but through analyzing the behavior of the spectators. Why so? In Chapter V, I will assess an answer to this question which takes as its point of departure the recognition that Kant condemned revolution as such in the strongest possible terms. I will then offer a more detailed discussion of “An Old Question” and argue that his moral disapproval of all revolutionary action is inconsistent with the basic premises of his social ethics. For my present purpose of “socially” extrapolating his theory of moral feeling, however, it suffices to argue briefly for two other theses which my discussion in Chapter V will further substantiate. The first is that Kant, notwithstanding his condemnation of revolution as such, holds—or, at least is rationally committed to holding—that the enthusiasm of the spectators is action-oriented: their enthusiasm, in

other words, is not merely enthusiasm for republican ideals but also enthusiasm for action based on these ideals. The second thesis is that Kant's turn to the spectators can be explained without recourse to his moral disapproval of revolutionary change.

That Kant, indeed, holds that the enthusiasm of the spectators is action-oriented follows from the fact that he speaks in the above of a "wishful participation" of the spectators in the French Revolution. Note, moreover, that he says here that this epoch-making event may turn out to be so violent that a sensible person would not resolve to execute it a second time—thereby at least suggesting that it may well have been sensible to start the Revolution the first time. What is more decisive, however, is that Kant's argument for progress presupposes that the enthusiasm of the spectators is action-oriented; for the point of this argument is that we may, and should, cherish the prospect that the spectators, like the revolutionaries, will act out of republican ideals when a later occasion for doing so emerges. That is, the final import of the enthusiasm of the spectators is that they, or spectators of future generations who recall the Revolution, will act like the revolutionaries, out of enthusiasm for the "concept of right," and ultimately, we may hope, out of enthusiasm for the moral society.

This last observation in itself already explains Kant's turn to the spectators, in that focusing attention on the enthusiasm of the revolutionaries alone would hardly ground the hope for progress. But there is another factor that plays a role. A crucial premise of the argument for progress is that a moral cause is at work in humanity—that is, "the disposition and capacity of the human race to be the cause of its own advance toward the better" ("An Old Question," p. 142; VII: 396). The disposition Kant is referring to is the moral disposition, and the cause must be understood as the capacity of the human race to be its own cause, i.e., the capacity to effect social change on autonomous grounds. I have little doubt that Kant thought that these features were manifest in (at least some of) the participants of the French Revolution, and his argument for progress supports this; however, on his own terms it would be difficult to argue directly for this claim, since we may assume that the Revolution was at least to some extent in the self-interest of its initiators. The situation is different for the spectators. In their case the suspicion of heteronomous volition does not arise, because the Revolution was not to their personal advantage. To the contrary, because the governments of the spectators attacked the Revolution, the very expression of their enthusiasm was "fraught with danger." The enthusiasm of the spectators demonstrates,

therefore, that a moral cause is at work: their wishful participation was motivated not by any subjective interest but by an objective (moral) interest in advancing humanity toward better political institutions, as a step toward the highest good. As Kant puts it, "genuine enthusiasm always moves only toward what is ideal [and] purely moral, . . . and it cannot be grafted onto self-interest."

These considerations indicate that moral enthusiasm may be seen as a social analogue of moral satisfaction. The idea of autonomous action arouses moral pleasure in the virtuous person, and what substantiates this feeling is his acting on maxims that accord with the law. The social analogue is that the idea of a moral humanity creates moral enthusiasm in the morally committed person, and what gives support to this feeling are those events which intimate that humanity is, indeed, taking an interest in the highest good or in its intermediate ends. Or we may say that, just as the final source of respect in its positive component is the ideal self, the final source of enthusiasm is ideal humanity, and, just as the virtuous person is morally satisfied with himself insofar as he is an ideal self, the person of moral commitment is enthusiastic about humanity insofar as humanity is an ideal humanity. Moral enthusiasm, then, can be ascribed to spectator and actor alike, and its occasion is not limited to epoch-making events. Rather, it is triggered in varying degrees by all those events which give us hope that it is not the case, to use the words of Kant cited earlier, that "everything in large [is] woven together from folly, childish vanity, even from childish malice and destructiveness." And, to stress a previous point once more, this hope is the hope of action, not that of mere contemplation.

Other conclusions can be drawn from explicating the social analogy between moral satisfaction and moral enthusiasm. We have noted that Kant argues that pleasure in the law can be cultivated through moral education by way of examples of individuals who have obeyed the moral law in adverse circumstances. These individuals deserve and receive our approval and admiration; more fundamental, however, is the fact that their actions inspire positive respect for the law. Initially, their actions humble us and strike down our superficial satisfaction with our own conduct, but this feeling turns into its opposite. We wish to follow the example set by their actions, and hence we wish to obey the law, recognizing the great worth of the law and the legislative self that guided the actions of these morally courageous individuals. Analogous observations can be made concerning the educative value of progressive historical events. Familiarity with events like the French

Revolution breaks down preoccupation with oneself and opens up new horizons of identification: humanity's final end—the highest good—and those individuals who have struggled for it. Further, such events are a source of inspiration and enthusiasm—an enthusiasm which is, at the final instance, an enthusiasm for the moral society and ideal humanity, stimulating action toward this ideal. And what makes this enthusiasm possible is not just that certain progressive historical events have brought humanity to higher levels, but also that at least some aspects of the great episodes of political history (e.g., the French Revolution and the Paris Commune) offer a glimpse of what the future may hold: voluntary cooperation and reciprocity is not merely a philosophical dream.

Solidarity

Thus far my analysis has shown that, although Kant's theory of moral feeling operates within too narrow confines, his essays on history point to a broader conception. Moreover, my analysis indicates that this very same theory can be fruitfully used to provide an adequate foundation for this broader conception, in that it furnishes the conceptual apparatus for grounding the ideas of moral anger and moral enthusiasm. The same holds good for the third and final emotive component of moral commitment that I wish to discuss here, namely, the feeling of solidarity. But now I will turn to *Virtue* (rather than to Kant's writings on history) and its notion of "natural sympathy" to explicate my proposal.

I will use the term 'solidarity' here as it is used at times in the socialist literature and tradition: it is sympathy with the victims of injustice. The German equivalent of sympathy, *Mitleid*, conveys better the core of this feeling: it is co-suffering, making the suffering of the *Mitmenschen* one's own.¹³ *Mitleid* is a broader concept than solidarity. One reason for placing solidarity rather than *Mitleid* in the foreground of a viable Kantian social ethics is that the most manifest *needless* human suffering is caused by unjust sociopolitical systems and that the commitment to change the world, accordingly, is focused on this needless suffering. Another reason is that the suffering caused by external nature and the human body can most adequately be dealt with under just sociopolitical arrangements, because sociopolitical conflict prevents the full employment of science and technology toward universal alleviation of this kind of suffering. Both reasons are historical reasons, in that solidarity will have become superfluous in the moral society and will be replaced by *Mitleid*.

Like moral indignation and enthusiasm, solidarity is a ra-

tionally—i.e., morally—produced feeling. This does not exclude recognition that this feeling has natural roots; rather, the point is that solidarity must be seen as a social-moral transformation of “natural sympathy.” Kant’s *Virtue* offers valuable suggestions for exploring solidarity along these lines:

But while it is not in itself a duty to experience sadness . . . in sympathy with others, it is a duty to participate actively in the fate of others. Hence we have an indirect duty to cultivate the sympathetic natural (aesthetic) feelings in us and to use them as so many means to participating from moral principles Thus it is our duty: not to avoid places where we shall find the poor who lack the most basic essentials, but rather to seek them out; not to shun sick-rooms or debtors’ prisons in order to avoid the painful sympathetic feelings that we cannot guard against (p. 126; VII: 271).

An explanatory note: the duty to cultivate the feeling of sympathy is an indirect duty because one cannot force oneself to have this feeling (or, for that matter, any other feeling; compare Kant’s claim that we have an indirect duty to be happy). What can be done, however, and according to Kant ought to be done, is to seek, or not to avoid, situations that evoke sympathy.

Three other comments are in order with respect to the above passage. First, although Kant does not mention explicitly that the feeling of sympathy must be ethicized, the logic of his argument points in this direction. If this feeling is to be appropriate to moral principles, it cannot be an empirically conditioned feeling, because our identification with others does not “naturally” comprise all those who suffer in adverse and unjust conditions.¹⁴ Thus it is the task of moral education to broaden the scope of natural sympathy and to bring it into accord with the requirements of the moral law. On similar grounds the feeling of solidarity is to be interpreted as mediated by morality, for its presupposes some moral ideal in light of which present suffering is seen as unnecessary and unjust. This observation leads to my second comment. There is no indication in the above passage that human suffering has sociopolitical roots. In other places in Kant’s work, however, these roots are exposed. I have already discussed his radical thesis that crime arises only under corrupt constitutions. I have also alluded to his hardly less radical view concerning the roots of poverty. While raising casuistical questions about the duty of beneficence, Kant states in *Virtue*:

The ability to practice beneficence, which depends on property, follows largely from the injustice of the government, which favors certain

men and so introduces an inequality of wealth that makes others need help. This being the case, does the rich man's help to the needy, on which he so readily prides himself as something meritorious, really deserve to be called beneficence at all? (p. 122; VII; 268).

The implication is that poverty will be abolished once just governments are created. Thus "natural sympathy" in the above examples resembles solidarity: the sympathy with the poor and the inhabitants of the debtors' prisons is co-suffering with the victims of injustice.¹⁵ Third, on this basis we can infer that from a Kantian perspective it is our indirect duty to cultivate the feeling of solidarity, the rationale of which is that this feeling helps us to fulfill our social duties.

The appeal to solidarity has always played an important role in the struggle for socialism. Marx, for example, stated in a speech after a congress of the First International (Amsterdam, September 8, 1872):

Citizens, let us think of the basic principle of the International: Solidarity. Only when we have established this life-giving principle on a sound basis among the numerous workers of all countries will we attain the great final goal which we have set ourselves. The revolution must be carried out with solidarity; this is the great lesson of the French Commune [March–May, 1871], which fell because none of the other centers—Berlin, Madrid, etc.,—developed great revolutionary movements comparable to the mighty uprising of the Paris proletariat.

And, in a rare reference to his own motivation for joining this struggle, Marx proceeded to say:

So far as I am concerned, I will continue my work and constantly strive to strengthen among all workers this solidarity that is so fruitful for the future. No, I will not withdraw from the International, and all the rest of my life will be, as have been all my efforts of the past, dedicated to the triumph of the social ideas which—you may be assured—will lead to the world domination by the proletariat.¹⁶

From a Kantian perspective, this call for solidarity may be rephrased as a call for making the suffering of the victims of repression one's own suffering, for this co-suffering means that one makes the struggle of others one's own struggle, setting aside "contingent" differences that separate those who seek improved social conditions. This latter point is crucial and underlines the moral nature of solidarity: it is only from the angle of some moral ideal, such as the socialist ideal, that differences in self-interest

appear as inessential and do not prevent united collective action. Marx's own life abundantly illustrates the preparedness to set aside what was, "objectively" speaking, in his own self-interest, and so his declaration of solidarity with the cause of the working class seems to be morally motivated. Yet this is not how Marx himself interpreted his own motivation; at least, his "official" theory, the materialistic conception of history, does not seem to permit such self-understanding. What this, in conjunction with his general remarks on the significance of solidarity, indicates is that the role of morality in his work is "repressed." And, as we will see in more detail in the closing chapter of this study, what further supports this contention is that a spirit of moral indignation prevails throughout Marx's writings and that he, despite himself, was morally enthusiastic about a historical event that fulfills in his work a function analogous to that of the French Revolution for Kant: the Paris Commune.

In conclusion, then, Kant's theory of moral feeling does not sufficiently incorporate the social dimension present in the categorical imperative: the highest good as a social ideal. Nonetheless, his work is helpful for discerning some emotive aspects of the commitment to seek the highest good, such as moral indignation, moral enthusiasm, and solidarity. More importantly, his theory of moral feeling, once suitably ("socially") modified, grounds these emotive aspects and yet preserves autonomy. I may add that my attempt to develop these issues, moving into what seems to be a relatively unexplored area within Kantian and social-moral thought, falls short of what eventually needs to be said. But I hope that my discussion shows at least two things. First, the "social" feelings I have outlined are important for understanding moral commitment and collective action. This is not to say that these feelings are indispensable as incentives for social action, but they certainly facilitate such action, and we may interpret social actions performed out of moral indignation, moral enthusiasm, or solidarity, as *moral* actions. These feelings are autonomous feelings, and their cultivation is imperative because they strengthen moral commitment. Second, to the extent that these feelings play a role in Marx's work, we can say that there is a Kantian dimension to his work. In Chapter VII I will exhibit several other such "Kantian elements" in Marx's social thought, noting that, since the role of morality is "repressed" in his work, none of these elements receives adequate philosophical grounding and explication. This argument will be a crucial step toward my final critical-constructive

conclusion that Marxism can greatly gain from making Kantian (socialist) ethics its moral foundation.

2. The Antinomy of Practical Reason

In *Practical Reason* Kant raises the question, "How is the highest good practically possible?" (p. 117; V: 123) and argues that the search for an answer leads us into the antinomy of practical reason. (Considering the wide variety of "conflicts of reason with itself" that Kant discusses under the term 'antinomy', it is difficult to give a short satisfactory definition of this notion. For our purposes, however, it suffices to say that an *antinomy* consists of two apparently contradictory propositions, the thesis and the antithesis, each of which is supported by seemingly conclusive theoretical or moral arguments.) This question can be understood in two ways, depending on whether the highest good is defined as the personal highest good, expressing the hope that the virtuous agent will experience happiness, or as a social ideal. My concern is with the latter, and I will accordingly focus on those aspects of the antinomy of practical reason which address the question, "How is the highest good as a social ideal practically possible?" Thus the antinomy has as its proposed solution the postulate of the existence of God. Kant's arguments for the antinomy and its solution develop along the following lines:

(a) The moral law demands that we promote the highest good in the world.

(b) The fulfillment of this duty requires that the highest good be possible.

(c) "In the highest good which is practical for us, i.e., one which is to be made real by our will, virtue and happiness are thought of as necessarily combined, so that the one cannot be assumed by a practical reason without the other belonging to it" (*ibid.*).

(d) This combination of virtue and happiness is either analytic or synthetic.

(e) It is not analytic because there is no identity between the pursuit of virtue and that of happiness. In other words, the practical principles of virtue and happiness are not the same. (Kant castigates the Epicurean for holding that the pursuit of happiness encompasses that of virtue. He is equally critical of the Stoic con-

tention that the pursuit of virtue encompasses that of happiness. Moral contentment must not be confused with happiness, and vice versa.)

(f) It follows that the combination of virtue and happiness must be synthetic. There are two possibilities: the pursuit of happiness must be the efficient cause of virtue, or the reverse.

(g) The first alternative is impossible, because making the maxim of furthering one's own happiness into the determining ground of the will is heteronomous willing.

(h) Therefore, virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness. But this is also impossible, "since every practical connection of causes and effects in the world, as a result of the determination of the will, is dependent not on the moral intentions of the will but on knowledge of natural laws and the physical capacity of using them to its purposes; consequently, no necessary connection, sufficient to the highest good, between happiness and virtue in the world can be expected from the most meticulous observance of the moral law" (p. 118; 124).

(i) It follows that the highest good is not possible.

(j) Considering (a) and (b), "the impossibility of the highest good must prove the falsity of the moral law also. [For if] the highest good is impossible . . . , then the moral law which commands that it be furthered must be fantastic, directed to empty imaginary ends, and consequently inherently false" (*ibid.*).

(k) We must avoid this disastrous inference through modifying (h). "[T]hat a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness is not . . . *absolutely* false" (p. 119; 125). It appears to be completely false because attention has been limited to the sensible world.

(l) Accordingly, we must turn to the intelligible world—that is, we must postulate the existence of "a cause of the whole of nature, itself distinct from nature, which contains the ground of the exact coincidence of happiness with morality" (p. 129; 135). This cause is an intelligible cause, for it is to mediate between moral intention and happiness; it is God.

(m) In conclusion, "the postulate of the possibility of a highest derived good (the best world) is at the same time the postulate of the reality of a highest original good, namely, the existence of God [and since] it was our duty to promote the highest good . . . , it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God" (p. 130; 136).

At the outset, Kant's arguments here pose a variety of problems. To begin with, he says that the antinomy is to be found in (f), namely, the thesis is that "striving for happiness produces a ground for a virtuous disposition," and the antithesis is that "a

virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness" (p. 119; 125). These propositions, however, lack even the appearance of being contradictory (they both may be false), and no support is offered for the thesis. The problem is easily solved. The antinomy must be sought in (h) or, more in accordance with the fact that the highest good is central to the antinomy, in (b) and (i). Thus the antinomy consists of the propositions that virtue produces happiness and that virtue is not the efficient cause of happiness; or, alternatively, the thesis and antithesis are, respectively, that the highest good is possible and that the highest good is not possible (cf. Beck, *Commentary*, pp. 247–48). In either case, the moral law is the ground for the thesis, whereas the antithesis is supported by our empirical knowledge of the sensible world. Moreover, in both cases the crux of the solution of the antinomy is that the antithesis is true only of the sensible world without an intelligible ground, and that, since theoretical reason can neither refute nor affirm the possibility of such a ground, practical reason may assume it for the sake of making tenable the duty to promote the highest good—a procedure which Kant sees as justified by his doctrine of the primacy of pure practical reason in its methodological aspect.

A second problem is that Kant's statement in (j) is misleading; for, if we take his claim seriously that the impossibility of the highest good proves the "falsity" of the moral law, there is no good reason to proceed with the argument for the existence of God. Rather, we should return to the Analytic of the second *Critique* and consider that the argument there for the "validity" of the moral law was not altogether convincing.¹⁷ Obviously, Kant did not have this in mind. The certainty of the law is presupposed; for only then is there an antinomy of practical reason and a *prima facie* need to postulate God.

A third problem is that it is unclear what the ultimate concern is that the antinomy addresses. Is Kant's concern with what will happen "in the end" (the identity of universal virtue and universal happiness)? Or is his concern with the *present* practicability of the moral ideal in the natural world—that is, are the two seemingly heterogeneous orders with their own kind of causality in principle compatible? My own view on this issue is that Kant poses in the antinomy the limited problem of the gap between the highest good itself and what humanity can do to actualize it, but that the postulate of the existence of God as the solution of the antinomy is meant to tackle the broader problem of the gap between the moral order and the natural order in general. To postulate God is to postulate a common ground or unity between the two orders, a

unity in potential form, to be actualized in the highest good. Or, as Kant puts it in (m), God is the "highest original good," whereas the moral society is the "highest derived good." Thus God is the "guarantee" of the ontic possibility in nature of an increasing unification of the moral order and the natural order through *human* action, which means that the main *objective* or systematic function of the postulate of God within the practical system is not to bridge the gap between the highest good itself and what we can do to actualize it, but to offer a ground for the belief in the feasibility of our efforts in this direction in the first place. Although this point is insufficiently stressed in Kant's work, it finds support in the fact that he frequently states with respect to the realization of the highest good that "man [must] proceed as though everything depended on him." Kant continues: "[O]nly on this condition dare he hope that higher wisdom will grant him the completion of his well-intentioned endeavors."¹⁸ The focus, then, is on what *we* can do, not on what God may do.

A possible alternative to my position is that the broader problem itself is the basis of the antinomy. The text, however, favors my view, because it emphasizes as a crucial premise of the antinomy that the physical capacities and natural knowledge of humanity fall short of what is needed to unite universal virtue and universal happiness [see (h); cf. *Religion*, p. 7n; VI: 146n]. The reading that is most definitely to be rejected is that Kant's over-all concern is limited to what will happen "in the end"; for this alternative, in contrast to the other two, conflicts with the primacy of praxis in his work. What further supports this claim is that Kant holds that moral faith as the *subjective* outcome of the postulate of the existence of God is conducive to, if not necessary for, a moral life committed to the pursuit of the highest good.

A final problem concerns Kant's contention in (c) that practical reason thinks of virtue and happiness as *necessarily* combined within the highest good. We have seen, however, that the realization of universal happiness is not intrinsic to the idea of the moral society, for the moral law demands only the realization of a community of legislators who *aim* at universal happiness. So what is the basis of Kant's claim?

This final problem will be pivotal to my further analysis of the antinomy of practical reason. I will first deal with the question of whether universal happiness is an attainable ideal. For this purpose I will examine Kant's view of the pursuit of happiness and briefly discuss the major sources of human suffering. My conclu-

sion will be that the realization of universal happiness indeed seems to fall outside the capacities of humanity; but, contrary to Kant, I will argue that this does not imply (without the assumption of God's existence) that the moral law projects an "empty" ideal [see (j)]. My contention will be that Kant confuses the demands of morality with those of desire in holding that practical reason thinks of virtue and happiness as necessarily combined within the highest good. This good must instead be seen as a moral society of legislators who attempt to realize one another's ends, but who do not necessarily succeed. My critique will lead to a discussion of some misunderstandings concerning the role of the highest good in Kant's work. The implication of my proposed definition of the highest good is that the antinomy dissolves and that the postulate of the existence of God should not be admitted to the practical system. I will end this section by providing two additional arguments for this claim. Its ramifications will be my concern in the third section, where I will turn to the importance of practical faith for moral praxis.

The Pursuit of Happiness

Although Kant holds that happiness constitutes an intrinsic part of the highest good, he does not offer an extensive analysis of the pursuit of happiness. His view might be called "liberal" and "anti-paternalistic" in that he argues that it is not the task of moral philosophy to prescribe the ends individuals seek in the pursuit of happiness; it can demand only that this pursuit remain within the limits set by the moral law.¹⁹ On Kant's account, then, the moral law leaves us free to pursue any end whatever provided that our pursuit can pass the universality test and thus does not undermine the external freedom of others. It remains, of course, true that the law demands that we seek certain ends which are duties, but Kant examines this kind of pursuit under the heading of the pursuit of virtue.

It is within this general framework that we can find two concepts of happiness in Kant's work.²⁰ On the one hand, he seems to adhere to a hedonistic view, arguing that the objects of desire are willed *solely* for the pleasure they may bring. Thus Kant claims that "a rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life which without interruption accompanies his whole existence is happiness" (*Practical Reason*, p. 20; V: 25). On the other hand, happiness is conceived of as harmony of ends. The following pas-

sage from *Religion* expounds this view, and it also specifies the role of practical reason in its pragmatic aspect in bringing about happiness as a harmony of ends:

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 a harmony in a wholeness which is called happiness. Now the reason which accomplishes this is termed *prudence* (p. 51; VI: 198).

Likewise, Kant states elsewhere that the unification of "all the ends which are prescribed by our desires [is] *happiness*" (*Pure Reason*, p. 632; III: 537–38). As examples of such ends he mentions, among others, "riches," "knowledge," "vision," and "health."²¹ Further, we may assume that the prudential task here comprises not only the systematization of personal ends into a unity but also the endeavor to find means that fit with those ends.

The concept of happiness as a harmony of ends is more satisfactory than the hedonistic view. The latter view derives its initial credibility from a confusion between the plausible claim that ends such as friendship and knowledge bring us pleasure and the implausible claim that these ends are sought *only* for the pleasure that may accompany their realization or possession. The first of these claims is consistent with the concept of happiness as a harmony of ends; hence, we may suspect that Kant confused the two claims. The hedonistic view fails also in that it omits the uniquely human dimension of happiness, as is manifest in the argument that Kant gives to show that happiness as such is not the purpose of our being endowed with reason:

Now if its preservation, its welfare—in a word, its happiness—were the real end of nature in a being having reason and will, then nature would have hit upon a very poor arrangement in appointing the reason of the creature to be the executor of this purpose. For all the actions which the creature has to perform with this intention, . . . would be dictated much more exactly by instinct, and that end would be far more certainly attained by instinct than it ever could be by reason (*Foundations*, p. 11; IV: 251).

This argument is based on the premise that happiness is a matter merely of self-preservation, instinctual gratification, and pleasure. But, certainly, human happiness involves more than this, containing elements such as knowledge, insight, and creativity, which all require free and rational activity. These elements can be better

accounted for in Kant's concept of happiness as a harmony of ends, and this is an additional reason why this concept is to be preferred to the hedonistic view. A final consideration is that the hedonistic view is hard to reconcile with the fact that most human beings project long-term ends and attempt to integrate them, making their life into a meaningful and systematic totality. Happiness is not just an accumulation of pleasant feelings, but is a process of living an integrated life, or having success in fulfilling one's life plan.

This idea of happiness, however, as a process of living an integrated life, is a somewhat broader notion than Kant's idea of happiness as a harmony of ends. It includes both the happiness of reason, i.e., moral contentment, and the happiness of the inclinations. Kant's idea of happiness as a harmony of ends is restricted to the latter kind of happiness, as is clear from his claim that the pursuit of happiness is a mere prudential task. This raises the following question. Although Kant was undoubtedly correct in asserting that in his society there was no identity between the pursuit of virtue and the pursuit of happiness as a harmony of ends, should we see this disparity as a given, or should we see it, at least in part, as a historical contingency? That is to say is it rational to hope that in the moral society the happiness of reason will no longer be acquired primarily at the expense of the happiness of the inclinations? A negative answer to this question darkens the prospect of universal happiness as a harmony of ends; for the conflict between moral reason and desire means that this harmony is based upon painful constraint. Moral contentment may compensate for this kind of constraint but does not eliminate it.

We may see Kant's claim that we should seek holiness as a partial response to the above question. In order that a reconciliation between moral reason and the inclinations, as the two determinants of the human will, may take place, practical reason must be assigned not only a restrictive function, limiting the pursuit of individual ends to those which pass the universality test, but it must also be given a constructive role: to transform human nature so that desires and needs no longer conflict with the moral law—the ethicization of human nature. For the sake of happiness, then, the general framework in which the pursuit of happiness as a prudential task proceeds must be seen as more constructive and less restrictive than Kant often suggests. This is also morally important, because the continuous conflict between moral reason and desire may tempt one to opt for the inclinations rather than for the moral law. In Kant's defense, however, it is to be noted that the

idea of striving for inner peace is implied by his claim that we must seek holiness. The holy will is never tempted to deviate from the moral law and thoroughly likes to obey the law, which ceases altogether to be a command (see *Practical Reason*, pp. 84 and 86; V: 90 and 92). Thus the holy will has only desires that accord with the moral law, and, hence, in seeking this ideal or archetype, the human agent must ethicize his desires. But, even in this context, Kant's remarks are not altogether satisfactory, falling short of the idea that the moral society involves a great step toward the achievement of peace in human nature.

It frequently seems that Kant thinks of seeking holiness as a mere process of overcoming desires, in the sense of negating them with painful constraint. The ethicization of human nature requires such self-compulsion, but Kant fails to stress that we may see self-compulsion as instrumental in overcoming itself, in that moral discipline leads to inner peace. A more serious problem pertains to one of his arguments which intends to show that holiness is unattainable for human beings:

To such level of moral disposition [as holiness] no creature can ever attain. For since he is a creature and consequently is always dependent with respect to what he needs for complete satisfaction with his condition, he can never be wholly free from desires and inclinations which, because they rest on physical causes, do not of themselves agree with the moral law, which has an entirely different source (*Practical Reason*, p. 86; V: 92).

Kant might be right in asserting that internal nature is alien to the moral law and that sensible beings cannot completely overcome this alien character by morally reshaping their nature. The problem, however, is that Kant suggests here that it is the very fact that human beings have sensuous desires which precludes holiness. Seeking holiness becomes then a question of freeing oneself of desires—and, of course, there are limits to this undertaking—rather than a question of ethicizing desires. The argument is also misleading in that it focuses on the “natural” opposition between desires and moral reason, thereby neglecting the fact that human desires are socially and historically mediated. What needs to be emphasized is that social conflict greatly intensifies the conflict between the inclinations and the moral law and that the ethicization of human nature, therefore, is intrinsically linked to the ethicization of human relations. Thus we may rationally hope that, in the moral society as a state of social peace, the conflict between moral reason and the inclinations, and, hence, the conflict be-

tween the pursuit of virtue and the pursuit of happiness, will become manageable for the individual and lose its sharpest edges, even if it does not disappear altogether because holiness sets, strictly speaking, an infinite task to be continued in the moral society. Happiness as a harmony of ends, then, will be brought onto a higher plane in the ideal society, in that the systematic unity of the ends of desire will to a large degree come to harmonize with the ends of moral reason.

Incorporating this regulative idea that happiness as a harmony of ends can be brought onto a higher plane, should we infer that universal obedience to the moral law, i.e., the end of social conflict, leads to universal happiness? A glance at the major sources of human suffering makes clear that this conclusion would be too hastily drawn.

The Major Sources of Human Suffering

There seem to be three major sources of human suffering: the unfitness of external nature for the human person, the limitations of the human body, and social conflict. The unfitness of nature manifests itself not only in the occurrence of natural disasters, but also, and primarily in the fact that nature has to be transformed in order to satisfy even the most basic human needs. The human body suffers in the process of death, with diseases and fatigue, and these physical phenomena inhibit the fulfillment of individual projects in the pursuit of happiness. Social conflict, in turn, shatters individual life plans and leads to violence and untimely death. These major sources of human suffering are closely related. The rise of social conflict within the history of the human species is not understandable unless we see it as caused in part by the unfitness of external nature and the limitations of the human body. The scarcity of material goods and the strenuous labor needed to obtain them have always contributed to social conflict. (Note that these factors alone do not explain social conflict; some other factors are what Kant calls the "unsocial sociability" of the human person, which we will discuss in the next chapter, and the inability to rationally control institutional interaction.) But, also, we cannot understand the suffering caused by the unfitness of external nature and the limitations of the body in separation from social conflict; such conflict has always intensified this suffering for most human beings for the sake of the few.

Human reason evolves from human suffering, and its task is to lessen this suffering. From this angle we may reformulate the

duty to seek the highest good as the duty to diminish the impact of the major sources of human suffering.²² Universal obedience to the moral law, as embodied in the idea of the moral society, means the end of social conflict. What does not follow, however, is that in this setting of universal cooperation all social problems and, hence, all socially determined suffering will have disappeared. Universal obedience to the law guarantees that social disagreements will be settled in a peaceful and rational manner, not that such disagreements will not occur. Moreover, the end of all social suffering presupposes that all institutional changes and decisions will have no inadvertent negative effects. But will it ever be within the scope of human reason to make completely transparent the workings of social mechanisms? This much is sure: within the moral society such unintentional negative consequences will be counteracted as soon as they occur, thereby minimizing their impact on human suffering. Further, the end of social conflict will tremendously lessen the suffering inflicted on humanity by the unfitness of nature. Human and natural resources will no longer be wasted, and the impetus behind scientific-technological development will be the furtherance of human happiness, rather than the present threat of the annihilation of the species. Most importantly, all of humanity will enjoy the fruits of this development. Yet it is doubtful that external nature can ever be brought into complete harmony with human desires and needs. Natural disasters and inadvertent negative effects of the domination of nature undermine the hope for the end of all suffering caused by the unfitness of external nature. Finally, death, disease, and fatigue will continue to be sources of suffering in the moral society, although the end of social conflict and the ensuing progress in health conditions will lessen their impact.

In short, the end of social conflict will be an enormous step forward in the reduction of human suffering, but suffering will remain. Death, disease, and the incapacity to understand and rationally control all social and natural mechanisms point to the limits of human action. These limits are limits to the idea of the end of all human suffering. This does not mean, however, that this idea cannot function as a historical regulative idea or that we should not operate on the assumption that the "limits of suffering" cannot always be pushed forward by "history." The importance of this regulative idea of the end of all human suffering is that it prevents any premature acceptance of human suffering. In addition, it is to be observed that the suffering in the moral society will take on a different character compared to suffering in the

present world. What makes present suffering particularly depressing, deplorable, and intolerable, as Kant noted for his own time (see *On the Old Saw*, p. 77; VI: 394), is that, for the most part, it is suffering that human agents directly or indirectly inflict upon one another. Nature causes pain and untimely death, but nature does not torture, murder, humiliate, and deprive human agents of their dignity in calculated processes of repression. Human violence is qualitatively different from natural violence, and only the latter kind of violence will remain in the moral society. In this society, moreover, the suffering inflicted on humanity by nature will be experienced in a cooperative setting: co-suffering (*Mitleid*) alleviates suffering.

A Further Specification of the Duty to Promote the Highest Good

The implication of the foregoing is that universal obedience to the moral law will not lead to universal happiness, or, at least, our present knowledge of the world makes this possibility implausible—a conclusion which becomes even stronger when we view happiness as uninterrupted pleasure rather than as a harmony of ends, for the latter view does not seem to exclude all suffering as inconsistent with itself. Kant came to the same basic conclusion; for his view, as we have seen in step (h) of his argument for the antinomy, is that “since every practical connection of causes and effects in the world . . . is dependent not on the moral intentions of the will but on knowledge of natural laws and the physical capacity of using them to its purposes . . . no necessary connection . . . between happiness and virtue in the world can be expected from the most meticulous observance of the moral law” (*Practical Reason*, p. 118; V: 124).

So far, then, my analysis supports and elaborates Kant's view. The relation between the moral society and universal happiness is not analytic but synthetic, and with respect to this synthetic relation it cannot be shown that universal obedience to the moral law is a sufficient cause of universal happiness. Kant, however, mistakenly infers in (j) that this means that (without the assumption of God's existence) the moral law demands that we seek an unattainable ideal. To see the ground of Kant's mistake, we must further examine a distinction drawn previously between two conceptions of the highest good, which are conflated in Kant's writings. The first is that the highest good is “a moral kingdom of purposes . . . viz., the existence of rational beings under moral

laws" (*Judgment*, p. 295; § 86; V, 524–25). The second is the conception of the highest good embedded in the antinomy of practical reason, as displayed in the second *Critique*, in which virtue and happiness are thought of as necessarily connected. I will call these conceptions, respectively, the *highest good*_m and the *highest good*_d, where 'm' stands for "moral" and 'd' for "desirable."²³ My reason for using this denotation will soon become more clear.

We have seen in our discussion of the *Foundations* that the categorical imperative demands that we seek the highest good_m. That is, we ought to seek a moral order of legislators who enhance one another's ends. This moral order is a morally (deontically) perfect world, and, hence, its realization means that moral reason will be satisfied. For within this order everyone will obey the moral law and will cooperate to promote universal happiness. Yet this world is not the most desirable world, because it is to be expected that human suffering will still occur. Accordingly, we desire the highest good_d. In the words of Kant:

That virtue . . . is the supreme condition of whatever appears to us to be desirable and thus of all our pursuit of happiness . . . [has] been proved . . . But [this does] not imply that virtue is the entire and perfect good as the object of the faculty of desire of rational finite beings. For this, happiness is also required, and indeed not merely in the partial eyes of a person who makes himself his end but even in the judgment of an impartial reason For to be in need of happiness and also worthy of it and yet not to partake of it could not be in accordance with the complete volition of an omnipotent rational being, if we assume such only for the sake of the argument (*Practical Reason*, pp. 114–15; V: 120–21).

Granted that impartial reason makes this claim, expressing an objective desire, it does not follow that the failure to realize this object of desire is a deontic failing. After all, it is meaningless to say that we are obliged to do things we simply cannot accomplish after even the most serious and persistent effort—the limits of what we possibly can do are the limits of what the moral law can require us to do ("ought implies can"). It seems that Kant held this view, as is indicated by his usual contention that we must promote rather than realize the highest good_d, and, yet, the untenable conclusion of a deontic failing follows from his claim in the argument for the antinomy that the highest good_d is the final end of the moral law. It seems, then, that Kant failed to draw a clear distinction between the demands of the law and those of desire, thus making the mistake in the antinomy, and elsewhere in his work, of presenting the "ought" of desire as a deontic "ought." Accord-

ingly, in premise (c) of the antinomy, the connection between virtue and happiness is declared to be morally necessary, whereas it is in fact necessary only from the perspective of impartial desire.

This criticism would be incorrect if Kant had shown that the law demands that we realize the highest good_d, but an adequate argument to this effect cannot be found in his work. This good is not grounded in the categorical imperative, although Kant may have thought otherwise, for the two conceptions of the highest good are also conflated in the *Foundations*; rather, the ground that is provided for this good is that it accords with the desire of the disinterested observer, i.e., the judgment of an impartial reason, and that an omnipotent rational being would bring it about. Here metaphors tend to take the place of philosophical reasoning and explanation.²⁴ In *Judgment* Kant even speaks of a "voice within," which tells us that virtue and happiness ought to be conjoined within the universe (p. 309; § 88; V: 539). This voice, it need not be said, is not the voice of duty, but that of desire.

The objection might be raised that for Kant the highest good_d is not merely an object of desire but the outcome of his principle of justice (*Gerechtigkeit*, not *Recht*) that the virtuous among us deserve to be happy. Now since we ought to seek a just world, the highest good_d presents us with a deontic "ought." This objection, I think, is merely a reformulation of the mistake embedded in the antinomy, although the principle of justice indeed seems to be a primary motivating factor behind Kant's construction of the highest good_d. The point is that the appeal to justice is not essentially different from the appeal made in the name of impartial desire. To be sure, the idea that everyone deserves to be happy in the moral society may seem to fit with our moral intuitions, but, from the perspective of duty, the only meaning that can be given to this desert is that it is our duty to attempt to make one another happy. The principle of justice, in other words, does not in fact set a deontic task different from the task implied by the idea of the highest good_m.

In conclusion, then, Kant's misguided contention that the limits of human action show that (without the assumption of God's existence) the moral law projects an "empty" ideal is based on his confusion of the demands of practical reason with those of desire. What these limits show instead is that the duty to promote the highest good_d is vacuous for human beings *insofar as it extends beyond* the duty to promote the moral order of colegislators who seek to enhance one another's ends. Note, moreover, that the highest good_m is also adequate as a moral ideal for beings more power-

ful than human beings; for, in seeking to realize the highest good_m, these beings will realize the highest good_d. The only practical function I can see for the highest good_d is that it sets more clearly than does the highest good_m—but *only* more clearly—a regulative standard for human conduct: we ought always to continue to reduce human suffering and seek the happiness of all moral agents; morality presents us with an infinite task, and practical reason will be satisfied only when we all seek to fulfill this task.²⁵

The conflation of the highest good_m and the highest good_d in Kant's work explains some misunderstandings concerning the significance of this good in his ethics. Equating his notion of the highest good with the highest good_d alone—that is, considering it in abstraction from the highest good_m—, the highest good is at times seen as a complete break with reality as we know it. Thus the relevance of this ideal is transferred from the realm of human action to the sphere of (a metaphysically interpreted) religious hope. Engels and Marx made this error, for, as we have noted, they claimed that Kant was satisfied with placing the harmony between the good will and its desires in the "world beyond." The result is that the highest good *as such* loses its praxis-related character. Besides, their view conflicts with Kant's contention that the highest good is the kingdom of God on earth.

A variant of this misunderstanding can be found in Lewis White Beck's *A Commentary on Kant's "Critique of Practical Reason."* Beck argues that the duty to promote the highest good is vacuous:

For suppose I do all in my power—which is all any moral decree can demand of me—to promote the highest good, what am I to do? Simply act out of respect for the law, which I already knew. I can do absolutely nothing else toward apportioning happiness in accordance with desert—that is the task of a moral governor of the universe, not of a laborer in the vineyard (pp. 244–45).

This contention is correct with respect to the highest good_d considered in itself; or, as I just have put it, the duty to promote the highest good_d, insofar as it extends beyond the duty to promote the highest good_m, is vacuous. Focusing attention on the highest good_d alone, I can also agree with Beck's claim with respect to the duty to promote the highest good that "Kant is almost casual in introducing his readers to this command of reason" and that "[n]one of the formulations of the categorical imperative have had this content" (p. 244). Failing to discern the distinction between the highest good_m and the highest good_d, Beck, however, draws the wrong inference that the duty to promote the highest good *as such*

is vacuous and not grounded in the categorical imperative. Thus Beck has contributed to the view that Kant's ethics is a private ethics. But the fault is not Beck's alone. By conflating the two notions of the highest good, Kant himself made insufficiently clear that the duty to promote the highest good is a social duty which follows from the moral law; it is only through a reconstruction that this social dimension in Kant's thought becomes apparent.

Beck's argument concerning the vacuity of the duty to promote the highest good has been contested by John R. Silber, but in doing so Silber gives an altogether different content to this duty than Kant did. Silber asserts that "it is obvious, Beck's denial notwithstanding, that in rearing children, serving on juries and grading papers one tries to do and actually can do something 'about apportioning happiness in accordance with desert.'"²⁶ Silber, then, maintains that the duty to promote the highest good requires that virtuous agents be made happy and that immoral persons be punished. What accounts for this interpretation?

One explanation is that Silber has misunderstood Kant's common claim to the effect that the highest good is "happiness in the world proportionate to worthiness to be happy" (virtue) (see, e.g., *Religion*, p. 7n; VI: 146n). Kant's meaning is not that we must make human beings as happy as they are virtuous, but that we must seek a world in which a virtuous humanity will be happy. Silber seems to have drawn the opposite conclusion. That he is in error we can infer from the observation that his view implies that the unhappy virtuous agent has a duty to become less virtuous, so as to balance virtue and happiness.²⁷ But perhaps Silber's interpretation is based on a different ground. We have seen that Kant adheres to the principle of justice that virtuous persons deserve to be happy. In a similar vein he says at some points in his work that "impartial reason" demands that the immoral deserve punishment.²⁸ Thus the broader principle of justice to be found in Kant is that virtuous persons deserve happiness, whereas the immoral deserve punishment. We may see Silber then as interpreting this principle of justice as a rule for human action.

There is no adequate textual support for this interpretation (see note 31, below), and the examples that Silber provides to give credibility to his view are either implausible in themselves or in conflict with Kant's moral viewpoint. To begin with, the example of grading papers is misguided in that it is based on equivocation. Grading papers is a question of intellectual desert, not of moral desert, and it is unlikely that Silber thinks otherwise. The second example concerning rearing children contradicts Kant's much more

enlightened view of moral education. Kant argues, as we have seen in the closing section of the previous chapter, that neither punishment nor reward is a proper means of moral instruction, because their use leads to the view that morality has merely instrumental value. For Kant moral education must instill respect for the moral law and must proceed through discussion and examples of truly moral action. Immoral behavior, moreover, must be met by expressing moral disapproval, which aims not at physical pain for the child, but at moral pain. What is wrong with Silber's final example is that the task of the members of a jury is to determine not moral guilt but legal responsibility. Kant was of this opinion. As he puts it in *Religion* (p. 66; VI: 214), "a human court of justice [as opposed to a divine court of justice] . . . attends merely to single offenses and therefore to the deed itself and what is relative thereto, and not to the general [moral] disposition."²⁹

In general, Silber's interpretation of the duty to promote the highest good fails in that it is hard to reconcile with Kant's thesis that we can never be sure whether our actions have moral worth because it always remains doubtful, even after the most thorough self-examination, whether they are based on self-love or on respect for the moral law (*Foundations*, pp. 22 ff; IV: 263 ff). Kant seems somewhat to overstate his case, one of his points being that we should continue with our moral efforts rather than flatter ourselves about our moral accomplishments. At any rate, the uncertainty concerning moral motives is even more manifest when the acts of other agents are to be judged, particularly in those cases in which morality and self-interest speak with one voice. (Recall that Kant turned for this reason to the spectators of the French Revolution rather than to its participants, in order to establish that the moral motive is operative in humanity.) From a Kantian perspective we should, therefore, be hesitant to judge the moral status of others on the basis of their acts, let alone distribute happiness according to desert.³⁰ To be sure, the cases for virtue and for vice are not symmetrical. It is more plausible to assume an evil motive behind a series of wrong acts than a virtuous motive behind a series of right acts. After all, the right acts could have been done merely for the sake of expected rewards. Accordingly, there is still the possibility that the second half of the principle of justice—the immoral deserve to be punished—has deontic relevance for Kant's ethics. His view on moral education points to the contrary. Moreover, Kant never says that human beings have the (moral) right to punish other human agents outside the legal realm, and he does not argue that the duty of beneficence should be qualified as de-

manding the promotion of the ends of virtuous agents only.³¹ The restriction on this duty is not that we should not promote the ends of immoral agents, but that we should not promote individual ends that do not accord with the law.

The principle of justice in Kant's writings is best understood as a cosmic principle, i.e., a principle of divine justice.³² His concern here goes beyond the highest good_d, which may be seen as the product of applying this principle to one particular situation, the final destiny of humanity. As Yovel observes in *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, one can find in Kant's work "a deep sensitivity to the phenomena of the suffering just and the prosperous sinner" (p. 63n). This concern does not translate into moral action except that we ought to seek the highest good_m, although Kant misleadingly suggested otherwise by maintaining that we must seek the highest good_d. The significance of the principle of justice must be sought in the sphere of hope. Kant holds that we may (rationally) hope that the suffering just will not always continue to suffer and that the prosperous sinners will not always continue to prosper. This hope is one aspect of moral faith. We may wonder whether it is morally defensible to hope that the happiness of the sinner will be shortlived, but I will not attempt to address this question, holding that this hope is not relevant for moral praxis.³³ What may be noted, though, is that the hope that the just will prosper and that the sinners will become just receives much more emphasis in Kant's work, and that only this hope is important for his concept of the highest good_d. The (different) hope that the virtuous will be rewarded and that the sinners will not go unpunished reflects the traditional belief in God as the *moral* judge. Interestingly enough, Silber acknowledges at one point that the task set by the highest good, as he interprets it, is "God-like in dimension."³⁴

The Postulate of the Existence of God

Provided that my argument is correct that we must seek the highest good_m, there is no antinomy of practical reason and, hence, no need to postulate God. More precisely, this postulate is no longer justifiable on the basis of the antinomy, for the substitution of the highest good_m for the highest good_d in the argument for the antinomy dissolves the antinomy.

This is not to say that there are not certain presuppositions embedded in the idea that we ought to seek the highest good_m. Past experience shows that nature is sufficiently susceptible to our

moral efforts to make this good possible, but, of course, we cannot prove that this will be also the case in the future. In the broadest terms, then, the idea that we ought to seek the highest good_m presupposes that nature will continue to be (to some degree) consonant with the moral task. The postulate of the existence of God grounds this "continuity" assumption: the moral order and the natural order have, regulatively speaking, their common origin in God, and God is the "guarantee" of (and explanation for) the ontic possibility in nature that the moral order can be impressed upon the natural order. The fact that we may see the postulate of God as fulfilling this function within the practical philosophy is, however, not a good reason to admit it to the practical philosophy. For the moral law is the ultimate ground for the postulate, and this ground can also be given for the bare assumption that nature will not defeat our efforts to realize the highest good_m. To be sure, in merely assuming this, rather than postulating God, there is a loss in explanatory power, and the contingent character of nature is not really overcome, but this is irrelevant, even on Kant's own terms. The concern is moral praxis and its necessary presuppositions, not a metaphysical understanding of the universe. Moreover, we will soon see that a defensible understanding of the idea of the primacy of pure practical reason in its methodological aspect points precisely to the view for which I am arguing.

Even if we accept Kant's contention that we ought to seek the highest good_d, there remains the problem that the solution of the antinomy is inconsistent with the claim that *we* ought to seek this good. In order that the gap between the highest good_m and the highest good_d be bridged, there must be a being with divine-like properties. Kant explains:

[W]e shall think this original Being as *all-knowing*; thus our inmost dispositions (which constitute the proper moral worth of the actions of rational beings of the world) will not be hid from Him. We shall think Him as *all-mighty*; thus He will be able to make the whole of nature accord with this highest purpose [the highest good_d] (*Judgment*, p. 295; § 86; V: 525).

Although not in equal detail in each case, Kant argues similarly that we must ascribe to this Being such "transcendental properties" as "all-good," "just," "wisdom," "eternity," and "omnipresence." But now consider again premise (a) of the argument for the antinomy. Strictly speaking, this premise must be understood as saying that we must *realize* rather than *promote* the highest good_d; for only in that sense does the crucial premise and conclusion (b)

follow, that the highest good_d must be possible. The solution of the antinomy contradicts premise (a); the passage just cited makes clear that it is God, not humanity, who must at the final instance realize the highest good_d. Moreover, we have seen (p. 68) that Kant says that we may expect that God will complete our moral endeavors. And, in accordance with this, Kant usually maintains that we must promote rather than realize the highest good_d. This means, in effect, that it is our duty to seek the highest good_m. The solution of the antinomy, then, further supports my previous argument that there is no good reason for claiming that there is an antinomy in the first place.³⁵

A final problem with the postulate is that it has more content than is needed to solve the antinomy. (For the sake of the argument, I again assume that the highest good_d is the final end set by the moral law.) This constitutes a sufficient reason to reject it as a solution of the antinomy. My basis for this claim is Kant's doctrine of the primacy of pure practical reason in its methodological aspect. This doctrine sanctions the acceptance of cognitive statements that (1) are undecidable: that is, such that theoretical reason can neither demonstrate nor refute them, (2) can be shown to state necessary conditions for moral praxis, and (3) are affirmed only for the sake of moral praxis.³⁶ The second statement is essential for my purposes here. In order that the doctrine be defensible, condition (2) must be strictly adhered to; for otherwise the critical system would lose its critical edge, opening the door to various unfounded (metaphysical) beliefs. I have taken condition (2) into account in my comment on the presuppositions of the idea that we ought to seek the highest good_m. Kant, however, violates this restriction, for in postulating God he assumes more than is strictly necessary to solve the antinomy. All we need to assume is that somehow nature can be brought into complete harmony with morality. Certainly, it is not required that we postulate the existence of an omnipotent, all-knowing, and all-good Being. To use Kant's own words, in order to solve the antinomy "we must assume *something* which contains the ground of the possibility and practical reality, i.e., the practicability, of a necessary moral final purpose" [the highest good_d] (*Judgment*, p. 308, § 88; V: 538).

Objectively, this "something" is all we need to assume, and yet Kant states additionally that it is "a wise Being governing the world according to moral laws." He maintains that the interpretation of the "something" as God is "subjectively necessary by the constitution of our cognitive faculties" (p. 309; 539). That is to say, our mode of cognition, taking as its model human intention and

creative activity, “forces” us to view the “something” as a divine being; for we can imagine only that such a divine being can bridge the gap between the highest good_m and the highest good_d. We can leave the merits of Kant’s observation an open question, for his observation is irrelevant as a justification for admitting the postulate of the existence of God to the practical system. The doctrine of the primacy of pure practical reason as applied to the antinomy permits us to accept that which has logical force, not that which has subjective and imaginative force.

Kant’s major reason for stepping beyond what is, logically speaking, required to solve the antinomy is, however, to be sought elsewhere. His surprising conclusion of the discussion of the antinomy in the second *Critique* hints at this reason. Kant first qualifies his argument for the antinomy:

I have said above that in the mere course of nature happiness exactly proportionate to moral worth is not to be expected and is indeed impossible and that therefore the possibility of the highest good from this side cannot be granted except under the presupposition of a moral Author of the world. . . . In fact, the impossibility mentioned is merely subjective. . . . [We] cannot prove that [the highest good_d] is impossible according to universal laws of nature [only], i.e., show this by objectively sufficient reasons. . . . [Thus] reason cannot objectively decide whether it is [possible] by universal laws of nature without a wise Author presiding over nature or whether only on the assumption of such an Author (pp. 150–51; V: 157).

This qualification is entirely appropriate. We cannot make the *objective* claim that nature cannot be completely reshaped by us so that universal happiness will be the result, for the statement in this form transcends the limits of theoretical reason. Nonetheless, we may criticize Kant for failing to recognize that the issue at stake is our ability to control not only natural mechanisms but also social ones, in that it is doubtful that universal virtue suffices for the elimination of all socially determined suffering. At any rate, the belief that we cannot produce universal happiness contains a *subjective* element: it is our limited knowledge that forces us in the direction of this conclusion. This is all the more reason to leave the solution of the antinomy open—that is, we should not even claim that the “something” is necessarily a transcendent or supersensible ground.

Kant, to the contrary, continues his concluding remarks by stating that although “the manner in which we are to think [the highest good_d] as possible is subject to our own choice,” there are

two subjective factors that settle this choice. But why should we settle this choice? Again, from the perspective of the doctrine of the primacy of pure practical reason, as applied to the antinomy, this is inappropriate. The first subjective factor I have already commented upon; it is the contention that our mode of cognition forces us to think of the highest good_d as possible only on the assumption of a moral governor of the universe. What may be noted, though, is that Kant weakens his case here by his claim that we can entertain the possibility that this good is attainable via the laws of nature alone. The second subjective factor concerns our motivational structure. Kant argues that of the two alternatives—(1) the highest good_d is possible by the laws of nature alone, and (2) it is possible only when we assume the existence of a wise Author presiding over nature—only the second “is conducive to morality” (*ibid.*, p. 151; 157). Kant does not explain here how the belief in God can be supportive of the moral task, but, considering the primacy of praxis in his work, we may assume that, of the two factors that settle the choice for the postulate of God, this is the decisive one: the assent to this postulate as the product of our mode of cognition is ultimately morally motivated. Instead, Kant states here that, as a voluntary decision, the choice to assume the existence of God is not commanded. His closing words, however, show that he thought such a command to be superfluous: “[Faith] rather springs from the moral disposition itself. It can therefore often waver even in the well disposed but can never fall into unbelief” (*ibid.*, p. 151; 158).

What is surprising about the above conclusion is Kant's acknowledgment that the postulate does not necessarily follow from the moral law; rather, it is a matter of choice. This conclusion contrasts sharply with another view we can detect in Kant, namely, that there is at least an objective ground for the postulate—the “something” as a transcendent ground—which we may then subjectively further specify as “God.” The conclusion is even more in disagreement with Kant's usual contention that the moral law—and, hence, the whole practical system—stands or falls with the postulate of the existence of God. His usual contention is concisely set forth in the following passage from the second *Critique*:

It is a duty to realize the highest good as far as it lies within our power to do so. . . . Consequently, it is unavoidable for every rational being in the world to assume whatever is necessary to its objective possibility. The assumption of the existence of God is as necessary as the moral law, in relation to which alone it is valid (p. 149n; 156n).

In summary and conclusion, my previous arguments have shown this to be incorrect. Since it is our duty to seek “the highest good *as far as it lies within our power to do so*,” it does not follow that the highest good_d must be possible. Hence, there is no antinomy, which means that the moral law alone does not provide a ground for the postulate of God. This also follows from my claim that the law demands that we seek the highest good_m and that the highest good_d considered in itself is rooted only in the demands of objective desire. Finally, even if we abstract from these considerations and maintain that the highest good_d is morally necessary, the resulting antinomy can be solved by the assumption that a mere “something” is the ground for the possibility of this good. This fits best with the doctrine of the primacy of pure practical reason in its methodological aspect and is, moreover, at least compatible with the idea that *we* ought to realize the highest good_d.

3. Moral Faith and Hope

That Kant’s major reason for stepping beyond the “minimal” solution of the antinomy is, indeed, his idea that belief in God is conducive to moral praxis becomes clear when we turn to *Judgment*. He describes in the following words the predicament of the person who holds that there is no God and future life and yet respects the law and seeks to fulfill its demands:

[This person] desires no advantage to himself from following [the moral law], either in this or another world; he wishes, rather, distastefully to establish the good. . . . But his effort is bounded. . . . Deceit, violence, and envy will always surround him, although he himself be honest, peaceable, and kindly; and the righteous men with whom he meets will, notwithstanding all their worthiness of happiness, be yet subjected by nature, which regards not this, to all the evils of want, disease, and untimely death. . . . So it will be until one wide grave engulfs them together (honest or not, it makes no difference) and throws them back . . . into the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter. . . . The purpose, then, which this well-intentioned person had and ought to have . . . , he must certainly give up as impossible. Or else, if he wishes . . . not to weaken the respect with which the moral law immediately inspires him, . . . he must . . . assume the being of a *moral* author of the world, that is, a God (pp. 303–4; § 87; V: 533–34).

Strictly speaking, Kant is mistaken in asserting that the atheist must give up the idea that the highest good_d is possible; for, as we have seen, the atheist may simply assume a mere “something” as

making this good possible. But this is not really the issue at stake in the above passage. Kant's concern here is not so much with the objective function of the postulate as with its subjective or motivational significance in terms of present moral action directed toward the moral ideal. Lacking faith, the atheist is confronted not only with the fact that he views the universe as indifferent to his own well-being and efforts, but also with the fact that he sees it as indifferent to the well-being of others and their efforts. Notice, incidentally, that Kant emphasizes the latter, not the former; even his doctrine of the personal highest good is in a sense more social than it often is taken to be, expressing *Mitleid*, if not solidarity. The atheist painfully observes that many virtuous persons around him do not experience their deserved happiness, while some sinners prosper, and he is convinced that their ultimate fate is alike—"one wide grave [will] engulf them together." Kant thinks that the atheist, confronted with these lamentable facts, will become morally discouraged, losing altogether his hope in the tenability of the moral project. Allen Wood puts the matter well when he states that for Kant the hope of the atheist for a good world "is not positively *refuted* by suffering and failure, but only rendered *groundless*. [That is], [f]ailure, suffering, and the evils of the world do not so much refute hope as exhaust it" (*Kant's Moral Religion*, p. 160).

Wood perceptively continues by pointing out that Kant held that "[m]oral faith is the outlook of the rational man who has chosen not to succumb to moral despair, who has chosen hope rather than despair." The person with faith is confronted with the same evils as the atheist, but he chooses to believe that the universe is not without justice. His trust in God is an expression of the trust that his moral actions do make a difference—for himself and others—even if he fails to see that they actually do make a difference. More emphatically, he trusts that the righteous will experience their deserved happiness, even if he fails to see how this will happen. The brute forces of nature are the first word, but the person with faith is confident that they will not be the last word. Presumably, in accordance with Kant's view, one may add that faith is an expression of the hope that, although the forces of injustice are the first word, they are not the last word. Such faith is not to be equated with certainty nor with knowledge; rather, it is a limited belief in suspense. Kant argues, accordingly, that any attempt to provide a theodicy is doomed to failure; such attempts transcend the limits of reason and are even harmful to the moral disposition and faith. His sympathy is with Job, not with Job's friends, who try in vain to explain Job's fate.³⁷ The idea that the

universe is not without justice, then, is a regulative idea. But, for Kant, uncertainty in "religious matters" is to be praised, not to be regretted. He declares that our limited insight is itself an indication that divine wisdom is operative in the universe, for if we were allowed to have more than "a glimpse" into "the realm of the supersensuous" and if "God and eternity in their fearsome majesty would stand unceasingly before our eyes," then "most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, few would be done from hope, none from duty," (*Practical Reason*, pp. 152–53; V: 159–60).

One's initial response might be, with Ralph C. S. Walker in his *Kant*, that the above observations concerning the atheist are "obviously wrong," for, as he puts it, "[i]f the atheist can adhere to the moral law despite his depressing beliefs so much the better for him, and there is no reason why he should not be able to."³⁸ I think that this claim has its merits, but is too facile. Walker explains that what is "so much the better" for the virtuous atheist is that he, in contrast to the believer, is not subject to the danger that his moral motive will be clouded by the thought of "heavenly rewards and punishments." Kant was acutely aware of this danger, arguing that hope (faith) is not to be equated with certainty and that hope is conditioned by obedience to the moral law. Yet he was at times critical of the human need for hope as embedded in faith, declaring it to be a question of man's "inescapable limitations" and of "human frailty" (see, for example, *Religion*, p. 6n; VI: 145n). So what is the basis of my claim that Walker's response is too facile?

Hope is a fourth emotive component of the moral commitment to change the world. The moral reformer who lacks faith, as explicated by Kant, may be able to face the fact that his moral actions are not conducive to his own well-being and even harm him; but is he able to face the indifference of the universe to the righteous individuals around him? Perhaps. He may even turn Kant's point around: the very fact that the brute forces of nature cause so much suffering may strengthen his resolve to seek a society in which the domination of nature will be a truly collective enterprise, benefiting all of humanity. Yet he must face the fact that even in this society there will remain suffering caused by nature. Can the reformer, without losing his moral determination, accept the view that it will always be the case that the fate of some human beings is beyond hope? More importantly, is he able to face the enormous suffering of the victims of injustice throughout history, while holding that this suffering cannot be redeemed? As I suggested earlier, this suffering is much harder to face than the suffering caused by

nature. But, again, the hope for redemption as embedded in faith may not be the best answer. The reformer may argue that the very fact that social suffering cannot be redeemed is all the more reason to seek a society in which this kind of suffering does not arise. Still, hope remains important for the reformer; he hopes that the future will bring progress toward the moral ideal. Can this hope be justified in light of the past? Is history steadily moving toward the moral ideal? Is the reformer justified in believing that others will collaborate in seeking the moral ideal? Are nature and morality sufficiently consonant to make this enterprise tenable?

Faith is an answer to all the above questions. My suggestion is that this faith, notwithstanding its profundity, may not be the best answer, but that all these questions should be addressed. The failure to take note of this makes Walker's response too facile. I see two basic problems with Kant's notion of faith as it relates to the moral commitment to change the world. First, faith is not specific enough to ground the hope that is conducive to this commitment. Or, at least, it is desirable that this hope be grounded in, or further supported by, past historical developments. Also, the idea that nature and morality (reason) are compatible needs to be further explicated in the only manner in which this idea can be really explicated within the limits of human experience: we should look at the gradual transformation of nature into a historical and humanized nature, corresponding to the gradual evolution of human reason in its moral and nonmoral aspects. Moreover, faith gives undue attention to the suffering caused by nature, which is a general problem with Kant's antinomy. The greatest dilemma for humanity is posed not by nature but by social conflict.³⁹ Second, Kant has not succeeded in providing an adequate philosophical foundation for faith. There is no need to repeat here all my arguments for this claim. Let me only point out once more that Kant did not in general hold that the very fact that faith is conducive to morality and satisfies the need for hope is a sufficient reason to admit the postulate of God to the practical system. Rather, Kant maintains that this motivational element is one factor that justifies the step from the objective ground of the postulate—the "something" as a transcendent ground—to its interpretation as an omnipotent just being; or, much more typically, he argues that the antinomy—and the moral law—make faith an objective practical necessity.

In short, a different approach is needed to ground hope as it relates to the moral commitment to change the world. I will argue in the next three chapters that a much more adequate approach can be found in Kant's historical writings. Here hope is grounded

not in the logical perplexities of pure practical reason, but in the historical process interpreted in regulative fashion. Thus the reflective judgment takes the place of the doctrine of the primacy of pure practical reason in its methodological aspect, and history becomes the bridge between the natural order and the moral order. Yet it would be a mistake to declare history to be the panacea for the practical philosophy and moral life as such. The idea of historical progress should not blind us to the immense suffering embedded in history. Hope may be unstable in light of this suffering, and faith here offers support, even if it is philosophically unfounded.

CHAPTER III

The Philosophy of History (A): Hope and the Morality of the Idea of Progress

In the first section of this chapter I will discuss Kant's contention that hope for historical progress is conducive to social action. I will also attempt, on the basis of Kant's notion of historical progress, to distinguish hope from optimism. My argument will be that optimism is based on a dogmatic (metaphysical) understanding of the idea of historical progress, whereas hope reflects a regulative understanding. On the same ground I will draw a distinction between pessimism and despair. I will end the section by arguing that hope for progress, as facilitating the moral task, does not undermine autonomy.

In the second section I will give a commentary on "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" (1784), which provides a good overview of the basic premises of Kant's philosophy of history as it seeks to ground hope for progress. This essay raises, moreover, two major issues central to a Kantian understanding of the idea of historical progress.

The first is whether this idea accords with the demands of morality. It has been claimed that the notion of historical progress is morally objectionable in that it implies that human beings are mere means for bringing about progress. Another problem arising from the idea of historical progress is embedded in the so-called

"paradox of anamnestic solidarity." It seems that the moral society, if it is to be a truly human society, must remember those who have struggled and suffered for its realization, but this remembering seems to conflict with the fact that a main objective of this society is to make human beings happy. This paradox points to the problem that history as a source of hope also invites despair, which emerges from the awareness that the suffering of the uncountable victims of injustice cannot be redeemed, a despair which may keep one from engaging in moral action toward the ideal society. In summary, the first major issue is that the turn to history for the sake of morality seems to contradict morality in various ways. I will discuss this issue in the third section.

The second major issue concerns the scope of the two vehicles of progress which Kant discerns within the course of history and which he projects toward the future: the mechanisms of self-interest, i.e., the "cunning of nature," and moral praxis. Kant offers the regulative idea that we may hope that self-interest alone will suffice to bring about the perfect state and international peace which constitute the highest political good. This idea: that moral action is not a *sine qua non* for the realization of the highest political good, deserves critical evaluation. It also raises the question of how we should perceive the relation between the highest political good and the moral society as the highest moral good. The highest political good seems to be an aspect of the moral society, but if self-interest alone can bring about ideal political institutions, then such institutions can hardly express that which is characteristic of the moral ideal, to wit, universal virtue. So in what social or institutional form, if any, will the moral society find its true expression? I will discuss the second major issue and its ramifications in Chapter IV.

Finally, in Chapter V, I will further explore Kant's view of the French Revolution as a sign of moral progress, and address his rejection of the right to revolution and to other forms of political resistance. I will also summarize the main theses of his philosophy of history and briefly assess the extent to which his hope for progress has materialized.

1. Hope for Progress and Its Relevance for Social Action

In *On the Old Saw: That May Be Right in Theory but Won't Work in Practice*, Kant writes:

If it is a sight fit for a god to see a virtuous man wrestle with tribulations and temptation and yet stand firm, it is a sight most unfit, I will not say for a god, but for the commonest man of good will to see the human race from period to period take upward steps toward virtue, only to see it soon after relapsing just as deeply into vice and misery. To watch this tragedy for a while may perhaps be touching and instructive, but eventually the curtain has to fall. For in the long run the tragedy becomes a farce, and though the actors, fools that they are, do not tire of it, the spectator will. After one or two acts he has had enough of it; he can correctly assume that the never-ending play is forever the same (p. 76; VI: 392–93).

But what is the bored or, more precisely, appalled spectator to do? Close his eyes or turn his back to the stage, concluding that any attempt to improve the human condition is in vain? No doubt, this is a common reaction, but it is not Kant's response. He maintains, in effect, that the drama we have just watched displays only the surface of the history of humanity. Accordingly, on his account, the spectator must reconstruct the human tragedy so that its progressive aspect becomes visible, watch the reconstructed drama, and encourage others to see it as well; then, inspired by it, he, and they, will attempt to steer the next act toward the moral society. To outline the basic features of such reconstruction is the moral task that Kant set for himself. The product is his work on history, in which he argued that the human race is indeed progressing.

These ideas can be deduced from the third section of *On the Old Saw*, which is a critical reply to Moses Mendelssohn's contention that "men progress but mankind constantly wavers within the same fixed limits; viewed as a whole it maintains at all periods of time about the same level of morality, the same measure of religion and irreligion, virtue and vice, happiness (?) and misery" (76; 392).¹ The outcome of this view is that the spectator of the human drama will indeed avert his eyes from the stage. Projecting this somber view into the future, he will not participate in the act to come, or, at least, he will fail to play a constructive role in it, for, as Kant observes, "[w]ithout [the] hope for better times the human heart would never have been warmed by a serious desire to do something useful for the common good; this hope has always influenced the labors of right-thinking men" (77; 394).

Kant argues that we should make an assumption which is directly opposed to Mendelssohn's, namely, "that our species, progressing steadily in civilization as its natural end, is also making strides for the better in regard to the moral end of its existence, and that this progress will be *interrupted* now and then, but never *broken off*" (77; 393).² Kant claims that he does not have to prove

this assumption and that the burden of proof is on its opponent. His ground for this claim is that the assumption accords with our duty to improve both society and the fate of humanity—a duty which is futile when we accept Mendelssohn's pessimistic thesis, undermining, as it does, the hope for human progress. Kant adds: "Let any number of doubts be drawn from history to dispute my hopes, doubts which, if conclusive, might move me to abandon a seemingly futile labor; but as long as the futility cannot be made wholly certain, I cannot exchange my duty . . . for the rule of prudence not to attempt the unfeasible" (77; 393–94).

Kant's contention that his assumption is not in need of proof is mistaken and is based on the conflation of two different issues. It is one thing to claim that we are always justified in hoping that humanity will make progress in the future; it is another thing to claim that humanity has made progress and that, therefore, we are justified in hoping that this progress will continue in the future. The former hope is necessary for the moral task, the latter only conducive to it.

The first claim, that we are always justified in hoping that humanity will make progress in the future, cannot be refuted by historical evidence, as Kant himself suggests in his reply to Mendelssohn, no matter how damaging this evidence may turn out to be for the second claim, that humanity is making progress toward the better. The thesis that the fate of humanity will always resemble that of Sisyphus transcends the limits of reason; it is an instance of *dogmatic* teleology in that it presumes that some purpose is determinative or constitutive of the historical process. (Mendelssohn maintains that our Sisyphian fate is an aspect of divine intention.) To explicate: on the basis of Kant's *critical* teleology we can, through a reflective judgment, ascribe a certain purpose to the historical process (viewed as the largely unintentional outcome of human conduct), but we cannot legitimately claim that this process constitutes itself along the lines of this purpose. Thus Kant's critical viewpoint rightly precludes our making any claim to the effect that we *know* that history is—or, is not—moving toward some goal, which, of course, does not imply that we cannot rationally *hope* (or, for that matter, fear) that certain "trends" will continue in the future. In general, we can counter the thesis that humanity will always move within the same boundaries of vice and virtue by noting that the future is to some extent open and that, as long as human beings are moral and free beings, moral progress belongs to the realm of possibilities. Now since the moral law demands that we seek the betterment of humanity, we should act on the

assumption that humanity will seek its own improvement, even if the odds are against it—hope against hope. The situation is altogether different for the second claim concerning the fact of progress, corresponding to Kant's assumption that the human species is progressing and will continue to progress, despite some possible interruptions. For, although historical evidence cannot conclusively refute or affirm such a thesis of progress, it is needed to give the thesis a certain degree of plausibility. In reflecting on the actual course of history, the philosopher may, or may not, be able to discern certain patterns or events that support his case—that is, he may, or may not, succeed in putting historical data into a cogent interpretive framework.

Once Mendelssohn's thesis of constant misery and vice is stripped of its dogmatic character, it is at the outset, i.e., in the absence of any historical evidence, as plausible as Kant's thesis of progress. Moreover, Mendelssohn's thesis in this form does not make the duty to seek the improvement of humanity altogether futile. Yet the thesis is an impediment to the moral task, declaring as it does that the past gives us no good reason to hope that the future will bring progress. In this respect, Kant's thesis is to be preferred as a point of departure. Both theses are teleological in character and, as such, have a regulative function. Their major regulative function is practical, not theoretical.³ Kant's thesis will stimulate social moral action, whereas Mendelssohn's thesis will discourage it. Additionally, it seems that only Kant's thesis can help us to come to terms with the problematic fact that we are beings situated within history. Hence, the moral law demands and justifies taking Kant's thesis as our point of departure. I deliberately say "point of departure," because it remains true that the thesis of progress must be substantiated. Kant seems to have been aware of this; for, despite his denial that his thesis need be proved, he continues his reply to Mendelssohn as follows: "Besides, there is a good deal of evidence to show that in our age, compared with all earlier ones, mankind has by and large really made considerable moral progress for the better" (78; 394).

Kant then proceeds to sketch some evidential support for his thesis of progress, from which it is clear that he rests his case on two basic observations. The first is that the cunning of nature has forced humanity to institutionalize the rule of law and will continue to force humanity to seek the perfect state and peace among the nations. That is to say, we may hope that the mechanisms of self-interest will bring humanity toward the realization of progressive political ends. (Contra Mendelssohn, then, we should

look behind the veil of constant misery and vice, so as to discern a progressive dialectic that develops notwithstanding, and even through, human selfishness.) These political ends are also required by the moral law, and so we may speak of progress, though not moral progress, because the moral motive is lacking. The second basic observation is that humanity is in fact making moral progress. We have noted that Kant saw the enthusiasm of the spectators of the French Revolution as indicative of a moral interest in republican ideals. This signifies moral progress, in that the moral motive was here at least directed toward proper political ideals. Rebutting Mendelssohn, Kant points out another sign of moral progress: "It can . . . be shown that the screaming about an irresistibly growing depravation of mankind comes from the very fact that, upon reaching a higher level of morality, we can see farther ahead, and that the severity of our judgments about what we are compared with what we ought to be—in other words, our self-criticism—increases the higher we have climbed on the moral ladder in all of what we have come to know of the world's course" (78; 394–95). Thus one would expect Kant to hold that the hope and prospect for the future is that the vehicle of progress will be to a lesser degree the cunning of nature and to a greater degree self-conscious action toward the moral ideal. In fact, however, he does not draw this conclusion in full force, but rather maintains, even in *On the Old Saw*, that we should expect progress to take place primarily through the cunning of nature.⁴ We will later see that Kant had too high an expectation of what the mechanisms of self-interest can accomplish in this regard.

What is most fascinating about Kant's reply to Mendelssohn is the suggestion that hope—and, hence, the grounding of hope in a reflective history—sets a moral task. Viewing the past as an eternal recurrence of the same evils, as a process devoid of progress, moral agents will most likely look to the future with despair. From here the step may be taken to resignation and pessimism, an attitude and feeling in which all moral action toward the better is declared to be futile. In light of our duty to improve society, then, it is morally imperative to fight against despair and to attempt to discover behind the veil of suffering and vice a progressive development, which grounds hope.

Recently this same idea has been forcefully put forward by Jean-Paul Sartre, in a conversation with Benny Lévy that addressed the relevance of hope for revolutionary praxis and the impact of despair on Sartre's work. Having described the "temptation of despair" during the years of the Second World War and the Korean War, Sartre ended the talk with the following words:

With this third world war, which is going to break out one day, with this miserable ensemble that our planet is, despair returns to tempt me again: the idea that we will not ever finish it, that there is not any goal, that there are only individual goals for which people struggle. . . . [T]here is not a goal for humanity, . . . there are only disruptions. It is possible to think something like that. This thought tempts us endlessly. . . . But . . . I resist, and I know that I will die in hope; but it is necessary to create a foundation for this hope.

We must try to explain why the world, now, . . . is only a moment in a long historical development, that hope has always been one of the dominant forces of revolutions and uprisings, and why I feel hope once again as my conception of the future.⁵

Regrettably, death prevented Sartre from taking on this project. His remarks in the conversation with Lévy indicate that it would have been essentially a Kantian project, but I will not attempt to argue for this claim here, my concern being to point out instead that Sartre supports Kant's view that hope is important for moral action directed toward social change. What may be briefly noted, though, is that Sartre argues here in very Kantian fashion that truly moral action prefigures the final goal of revolution—that is, a brotherhood of humans.⁶ Thus through action we can uphold the hope for the moral ideal, even in “hopeless” times.

Grounded or justified hope for historical progress, as contrasted with wishful thinking, is to be distinguished from optimism as it relates to the idea of progress, just as despair and pessimism denote different attitudes and feelings in this context. These distinctions can be explicated along Kantian lines. Optimism is an attitude of certitude, in which it is declared that the triumph of good over evil is inevitable and guaranteed. This optimism is often established at the cost of neglecting all the evil and suffering embedded in the historical process—hence, its shallow overtones. Kant's view of history is not optimistic, and he does not cover up the darker side of the past of humanity. His weapon against optimism is irony, unmasking the foolishness of human behavior, both in the past and in the present, and the pretense that cultural and scientific progress are by themselves indications of truly human progress—that is, moral progress of the species. Optimism transcends the limits of reason and involves a dogmatic interpretation of the idea of progress. Such historical optimism can, for example, be found in the work of Marx at those points where the fall of capitalism and the rise of communism are declared to be inevitable, as being the product of natural, i.e., immanent or constitutive, laws of history. Hope, to the contrary, moves within the limits of reason and the critical reflective judgment,

professing uncertainty about that which is uncertain for us, the future. In Kant's philosophy of history ideas such as that of the cunning of nature have not a constitutive but a regulative status, supporting the praxis-related hope that the future will bring progress. Despair is a lack of hope; one recognizes that hope is important for moral action but fails to see that there are good grounds for hope. This may lead to pessimism. Failing to see grounds for hope, one declares that there are no such grounds, now or in the future, and that the triumph of evil over good will always remain with us. Mendelssohn's thesis is pessimistic in nature, reversing the dogmatism of optimism.

Kant's assertion in *On the Old Saw* that "[w]ithout [the] hope for better times the human heart would never have been warmed by a serious desire to do something useful for the common good" may seem to conflict with his notion of autonomy. Whether hope is justified seems to be a contingent matter, depending, among other factors, on past and present sociopolitical developments, and, once our obedience to the moral law is conditioned by such contingent states of affairs, autonomy is surrendered. Here again the distinction between two kinds of hope, or between two different ways in which we can justify our hope, is important. We are always justified in hoping for moral progress as such—whether it is on the individual or the collective level—irrespective of contingent developments. This hope is embedded in the very notion of autonomy; for autonomy sets a task—that of realizing the self-legislating individual or the community of legislators—and, in seeking to fulfill this task, we assume and hope that it is within the scope of human power. Were it possible to show that the human race would never make progress, which Kant rightly denies, not only would the hope for better times be undermined, but Kant's ethics itself would collapse. As for hope as it relates to the idea of historical progress, this is not necessary to the moral task but conducive to it. This hope is on a par with the other emotive components of the moral commitment to change the world. Certain feelings cooperate, as it were, with the demands of the moral law, e.g., moral enthusiasm and solidarity, whereas other feelings make obedience to the law more difficult, e.g., self-love. Hope grounded in the idea of historical progress belongs to the former group, despair to the latter. Such hope is an autonomous feeling, arising from taking an interest in the moral law and its final end. The same might be true of despair—after all, such feeling typically arises from taking a moral interest in the future—but the law also demands that we resist its "temptation." Even when the idea of

historical progress turns out to be unwarranted, despair can still be resisted. We can always fall back on hope as it is grounded in the notion of autonomy. Moreover, we can turn our attention to those who have struggled for the betterment of humanity, even in the most discouraging situations, and we can attempt to follow their example, both in feeling and in action. We may once again note (with Kant and Sartre) that where there is moral action there is hope; in mirroring the moral ideal in present social action we can keep the hope for the ideal alive.

2. A Commentary on "Universal History"

"Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" consists of an introduction and nine theses with explications. The central concern of this essay is to ground hope for progress, but it also seeks to reflect on the moral significance of the fact that we are historical beings. The two concerns are complementary in that their shared aim is to inspire moral action.

In the introduction Kant expresses his indignation, discussed in the previous chapter, about the foolishness and destructiveness of human actions throughout history. Although such moral anger may lead to the resolve to change society for the better, there is danger that reflection on history may result in despair and even pessimism. It is, therefore, imperative to seek grounds for the hope that the folly and malice of human actions are of a passing nature.⁷ This hope cannot be grounded in the ends that (most) historical agents set for themselves, for folly and malice arise precisely because these agents seek only subjective ends, often in opposition to one another, each following his natural impulses and inclinations. Kant presents the following solution:

Since the philosopher cannot assume that humanity in its drama at large has a rational purpose of its own, 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 plan of nature for creatures who have no plan of their own (p. 12; IV: 152; translation altered).⁸

In other words, since the history of humanity is not the result of humanity's shaping its own destiny along some agreed-on plan, but rather the blind product of selfish action (rational versus natu-

ral history), the philosopher must attempt to discern a progressive pattern within human history which is unintended, i.e., a plan of nature. This claim that human history is a natural history is not to be taken too literally, for, as Kant wryly remarks in his introduction, it is no problem to write a systematic history of bees or beavers.

Throughout the essay Kant uses the term 'nature' as though nature were a quasi person with a will and intention. This is awkward and confusing, not so much in those cases in which 'nature' refers to human nature or our natural environment as in those cases in which it refers to (aspects of) the historical process. His general meaning in these instances, however, can be easily reconstructed as follows. When Kant argues that nature wills something, we can rephrase this as saying that we can ascribe a definite purpose or plan to certain historical developments or events. This purpose or plan is not consciously pursued by the historical actors; rather, it is unintentionally shaped, just as natural organisms "blindly" develop toward their ends. Now since it is the Kantian philosophical historian who ascribes a definite purpose or plan to the historical drama in its various aspects, it may seem that what nature wills is really what this historian wills. This is true in the limited and specific sense that the moral law guides the reconstructive-historical labor of the Kantian historian. What does not follow, however, is that this historian wills history as it is. History is not rational, although certainly the Kantian historian sees it as his task to offer an interpretation of history that is rational, i.e., the grounding of hope in the idea of progress. He seeks, in other words, to ascribe a rational purpose or plan to certain historical developments and events, but this does not mean that he views these processes as in themselves rational. This distinction is essential, for the mistake that must be avoided is to interpret Kant as engaged in a justification of history in the manner of Hegel. That Kant is indeed not engaged in a justification of history we can infer from the fact that his philosophy of history is based on a critical teleology, not, like Hegel's philosophy of history, on a dogmatic one.

The natural plan, as the title of the essay indicates, is to be understood as a regulative and reflective idea; it unfolds within the history of the human species (i.e., a universal history), and it aims at a "universal cosmopolitan state." The purpose of this perfect political union is the moral society. However, in this essay Kant does not yet draw a clear distinction between the highest political good and the highest moral good; the distinction is only hinted at,

as when he asserts under the seventh thesis that the union of states "is the halfway mark in the development of mankind" (p. 21; 161). This reflects the fact that "Universal History" predates Kant's major ethical and sociopolitical writings. Nonetheless, this essay accords in general with these writings and is to be seen as belonging to the critical *corpus*.

The *first thesis* formulates the regulative principle that "[a]ll natural capacities of a creature are destined to evolve completely to their natural end" (p. 12; 152). Applying this principle to the human animal, we become aware of the unique situation in which this rational being finds himself.

The *second thesis* states:

In man (as the only rational creature on earth) those capacities which are directed to the use of his reason are to be fully developed in the race, not in the individual (p. 13; 153).

Kant supports this thesis with the observation that reason requires trial, practice, and instruction so that it may proceed to higher levels. That is, reason must produce itself step by step; it is not a given but a task (*Aufgabe*). In contrast to other animals, then, the human animal is not what may be called a "closed" organism, having a determined end with capacities adequate to it, but is an "open" organism, destined to realize his capacities, as Kant says, in "unreckonable series of generations." This means that it is our fate to be historical beings; what we are depends on our position in the historical process.⁹

In *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* Kant further explicates the capacities that set humans apart from other animals:

Among the living beings that inhabit the earth, man is easily distinguished from all other natural beings by his *technical* predisposition for manipulating things . . . , 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) (p. 183; VIII: 216).

Kant adds that any one of these predisposition suffices to distinguish the human creature from other creatures because each predisposition is rational in nature. The technical predisposition manifests itself in human labor, and its primary tool is the human hand. Kant makes the interesting observation that the very fact that the human hand lends itself to multifarious purposes indicates that the human animal is a rational animal, for this open

character of the hand requires the use of reason (p. 184; 217–18). The pragmatic predisposition allows the fulfillment of the human agent as a social and cultural being and encompasses “his natural tendency in social relations to leave the crude state of mere private force and to become a well-bred (if not yet moral) being destined for concord” (p. 185; 218). However, the human agent is not only a social being; he is unsocial as well, wishing that everything go his way. The fourth thesis of “Universal History” (to anticipate) makes clear that, since the road to concord traverses discord, the realization of the pragmatic capacity for social control develops at a high human cost. Kant places science also on the pragmatic level, which reflects the fact that science in his time had predominantly cultural rather than technological value. The fulfillment of the pragmatic capacities in general requires instruction and education through suffering and failing, and, again, it is noted that, in contrast to other animals, “the human race can work its way up to its destiny only by *progress* throughout a series of innumerable generations” (*ibid.*). The same holds for the moral predisposition and its evolution. The highest good is the ultimate purpose and regulative idea of history, and humanity can only gradually approach this ideal, both in understanding and in action.

Kant’s distinction between three predispositions and, hence, three levels of progress is crucial for his philosophy of history. His main thesis is that developments on the technological level, and, in particular, on the pragmatic level, including social control, science, and culture, set the stage for and are conducive to developments on the moral level. Culture and science discipline human beings’ crude desires, and, together with political peace in and between the states, they prepare the ground for universal obedience to the self-legislated moral law, i.e., the moral society.

The *third thesis* reflects on the fact that it is our fate to be historical beings:

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 (p. 13; 153).

Guided by the regulative principle that “nature does nothing in vain,” the philosophical historian wonders what the purpose could be of our lack of instinctual determination. Kant argues that it indicates that we must create ourselves so that we can take credit for what we have made of ourselves. Insight, intelligence, happi-

ness, and virtue are not given, but rather pose tasks for humanity. The affirmation of these tasks—that is, the affirmation of free rationality—leads to self-esteem and, Kant adds, makes us “worthy of life and well-being.” Nonetheless, a certain injustice seems to be embedded in the historical process. Kant writes:

It remains strange that the 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, and yet that only the latest of the generations should have the good fortune to inhabit the building on which a long line of their ancestors had (unintentionally) labored without being permitted to partake of the fortune they had prepared. However puzzling this may be, it is necessary if one assumes that a species of animals should have reason, and . . . should develop their capacities to perfection (14; 154).¹⁰

Certainly, most members of past generations have *unintentionally* labored for the sake of future generations, and what makes this in a sense unfair is that they lacked the self-esteem that would have arisen from the conscious affirmation of free rationality. Their arduous labor was not freely chosen, but was rather the forced product of a lack of instinctual determination and a hostile natural and social environment. The conscious affirmation of free rationality, in other words, is an option which is itself the product of historical progress.

This leads William A. Galston in his *Kant and the Problem of History* (*op. cit.*) to argue that Kant's philosophy of history conflicts with the basic injunction of his ethics that human beings should never be treated as a means only. Galston maintains that on Kant's account, history uses not only past generations as a mere means, forcing them unwittingly to contribute to historical progress, but also later generations as well, in that they are forced into the moral condition. Thus Galston comes to the conclusion that, according to Kant's conception of history, later generations do not have good reason for self-esteem; they are merely lucky (p. 233). This view is mistaken. For Kant, history cannot force human agents to affirm free rationality; rather, certain historical conditions (will) facilitate the occurrence of such affirmation. Moreover, morality sets an infinite task, and moral agents who take on this task are justified in their self-esteem.

That Kant's notion of historical progress is somehow inconsistent with his ethics is also argued by Hannah Arendt in her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*¹¹:

In Kant himself there is this contradiction: Infinite Progress is the law of the human species; at the same time, man's dignity demands that he be seen (every single one of us) in his particularity and, as such, be seen—but without any comparison and independent of time—as reflecting mankind in general. In other words, the very idea of progress—if it is more than a change in circumstances and an improvement of the world—contradicts Kant's notion of man's dignity. It is against human dignity to believe in progress. Progress, moreover, means that the story never has an end. The end of the story itself is in infinity. There is no point at which we might stand still and look back with the backward glance of the historian (p. 77).

Arendt's lectures break off at this point, leaving us to guess what the import is of the last sentence. Perhaps she wished to convey that, since the idea of infinite progress implies a changing conception of ideal humanity, it precludes our perceiving ourselves, in reflecting on our historical condition, as mirroring humanity in general—that is, we cannot “look back with the backward glance of the historian” and are degraded to mere pages in the endless story. In the third section of this chapter I will return to Arendt's criticism as well as to Galston's objection insofar as I have not yet rebutted this objection.

In the *fourth thesis* Kant expounds the idea I have earlier referred to as the *cunning of nature*:

The means employed by nature to bring about the development of all the capacities of men is their antagonism in society, in so far as this is, in the end, the cause of a lawful order among men (p. 15; 155).¹²

Kant explains that by ‘antagonism’ he means “the unsocial sociability of men, i.e., their propensity to enter into society, bound together with a mutual opposition which constantly threatens to break up the society.” The individual is inclined to associate with others because they are needed in order for him to develop and affirm his ego and thus to overcome his mere natural existence. At the same time, the individual wants everything to go his way and in this respect others pose a threat, undermining the centrality of his will by their attempt to impose in their turn their selfish wills.¹³ Hence, Kant says that the human agent wants “to achieve a rank among his fellows whom he cannot tolerate but from whom he cannot withdraw.” The conflict between individuals does not always take on an overt form; it is at times disguised. In *Anthropology* Kant perceptively observes that the human agent may hide his selfishness “so that his apparent self-abnegation and specious

modesty will give him a better chance of being highly esteemed by others (p. 10; VIII: 12). Further, it is to be noted that, although in "Universal History" Kant emphasizes recognition and lust for power as factors that make human beings enter society and bring them into conflict, he did not neglect "material" factors such as survival, wealth, exploitation, and division of labor, as we will see in the next chapter.

The antagonism between human beings forces them gradually to develop their talents and refine their taste. The crude passions are controlled, a sense for free choice is developed, and unintentional preparation is made for a legal order. Kant elaborates: "[T]he 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 pathological causes into a moral whole" ("Universal History," p. 15; IV: 155; translation altered). Through what in *Judgment* is called "the culture of discipline," then, unsocial sociability gives rise to a mode of thought in which it is realized that social conflict will continue as long as the social order reflects a particular will rather than a universal will, i.e., the rule of law. Kant held that this mode of thought was emerging in his own time; it is (the best of) the spirit of the Enlightenment.

Unsocial sociability is nature's trick of forcing historical agents to promote unintentionally a lawful order. This cunning of nature is highlighted by the fact that these agents often long for the very opposite of what nature forces them to accomplish. Kant maintains that without the "unamiable characteristics of unsociability . . . all talents would remain hidden, unborn in an Arcadian shepherd's life," for the human agent wishes "to live comfortably and pleasantly." Nature, however, "wills that he should be plunged from sloth and passive contentment into labor and trouble, in order that he may find means of extricating himself from them." This leads Kant to exclaim: "Thanks be to nature, then, for the incompatibility, for heartless competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess and to rule!" He adds: "Without them, all the excellent natural capacities of humanity would forever sleep, undeveloped" ("Universal History," p. 16; IV: 156).

The wryness of these statements should not be missed, as if Kant were engaged in a justification of nature or history. Why should we be truly grateful for the fact that the internal (and external) nature of humanity is such that progress takes place through suffering and violent discord? History cannot be justified, and the past cannot be undone. So the problem is to give it a

meaning that fits best with the future and moral praxis. In reflecting on history, we discern that the rise of reason and culture is rooted in and promoted by the most dislikable human traits, such as lust for power and competitive vanity. One response to this deplorable situation is to reject reason and culture; thus evolves the longing for the pre-cultural life free from worries, i.e., the Arcadian shepherd's life. This response is inadequate, not only because it contradicts the unsocial sociability of the human individual, which precludes his being satisfied with the simple life, but also because it conflicts with the demands of the moral law. Besides, it "conveniently" forgets that the pre-cultural life is one of hardship due to lack of control of external nature. The response that accords with the law is that we affirm reason and culture and that we seek to eliminate their deplorable roots through the realization of the moral society. This means that, up to a certain point, there is an overlap between moral reason and the cunning of nature; the former demands that we seek the development of our rational capacities, the latter forces us in this direction. In other words, the cunning of nature unwittingly prepares humanity for that which is also morally demanded, a legal order (as a step toward the moral order). The moral person cannot, and does not wish to condone unsocial sociability—after all, he seeks to overcome it in the moral society—or deny its positive effect, either in the past or in the future. After all, the cunning of nature is a source of hope that a truly legal order will come about. Expecting that something good will come from something evil, the moral person thanks nature with a touch of irony, while attempting by way of moral action to make its role superfluous.

The longing for the simple life is discussed in more detail in "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" (1786), which is a philosophical interpretation of the Book of Genesis (2–6). With humor and insight, the tasting of the forbidden fruit (an attempt at free choice), the fig leaf (imagination, mastering mere sensual impulse), and the departure from paradise (conscious expectation of the future) are interpreted as so many steps in the awakening of reason and the release from the "womb of nature." The human individual often experienced this release as a mixed blessing. Kant observes: "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" (p. 59; IV: 333). Kant saw these yearnings also displayed in his own time, as in poetic dreams of a future golden age in which human beings would live in peace

and equality, being content with the "mere satisfaction of natural needs" and "childish play." After pointing out that such yearnings have been spurred by stories like *Robinson Crusoe* and reports of the South Sea Islands, he writes: "The existence of such yearnings proves that thoughtful persons weary of civilized life, if they seek its value in pleasure alone, and, if, reminded by reason that they might give value to life by actions, fall back on laziness, to counteract this reminder (p. 68; 341).

Behind the longing for paradise as the "imagined state of bliss," then, is hidden the refusal, rooted in laziness, to take on the burden of promoting reason and the advancement of humanity, a refusal which may even express itself in a hatred of reason.¹⁴ From this, and his other criticisms of the longing for the pre-cultural life, we should, however, not draw the conclusion that Kant considered the need for peace, tranquility, and simple happiness as altogether illegitimate. We may speculate that he even had a certain sympathy for this kind of longing insofar as it reflects a critique of the shallow aspects of the culture of the Enlightenment; for he suggests under the seventh thesis of "Universal History" that this culture is primarily "nothing but pretense and glittering misery." Yet, as we have indirectly noted, the proper response to longing for tranquility in a chaotic and artificial society is not less culture but more genuine culture, including moral and political education, so that "art will be strong and perfect enough to become a second nature." Kant declares that this is "the ultimate moral end of the human species."¹⁵ In short, then, the regressive need for simple joy must be brought onto a higher plane: true pacification of human nature requires its ethicization which, in turn, requires a just social order.

The fifth to eighth theses of "Universal History" are concerned with the intermediate steps toward the "ultimate moral end" and discuss nature's not-so-gentle hand in pushing humanity in this direction. In addition, they explicate what is meant by the "lawful ordering among men," as mentioned in the fourth thesis.

The *fifth thesis* states:

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 (p. 16; 156).

Kant describes this society as 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." Since the members of this "perfectly

just civic constitution" stand in antagonistic relation to one another, reflecting their unsociability, Kant argues that an "irresistible power" is needed to guarantee "freedom under external laws." This poses what seems to be an insoluble dilemma, namely, how can such power be universal in character in a society in which citizen's wills are particular?

Partly because of this dilemma, the *sixth thesis* maintains that the problem of achieving a universal civic society "*is the most difficult and the last to be solved by mankind*" (p. 17; 157).

In his explication of this thesis, Kant puts the dilemma as follows:

[A]lthough as a reasonable being [the human agent] wishes to have a law which limits the freedom of all, his selfish animal impulses tempt him, where possible, to exempt himself from them. He thus requires a master who will break his will and force him to obey a will that is universally valid, under which each can be free. But whence does he get his master? Only from the human race. But then the master is himself an animal, and needs a master (p. 17; 157).¹⁶

Kant declares that a complete solution of this dilemma is impossible, pointing out that "from such crooked wood as man is made of, nothing perfectly straight can be built." I have said earlier that this statement reflects moral anger. Here the statement also seems to indicate that the idea of a perfect civic constitution is a regulative idea, setting an infinite task for human beings.¹⁷ That is, legal improvement is always possible even within the ideal state, in that the laws of this state can always be further changed so as to express better equal freedom for its citizens. At any rate, Kant then proceeds with the following observations to show why the realization of the perfect constitution is the last problem that will be solved by humanity: "it requires that there be 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" ("Universal History," p. 18; IV: 158; my emphasis).

This last observation suggests that the realization of the perfect state presupposes self-mastery. The master sought is the moral law, and the autonomous citizen freely obeys this self-imposed law and its corresponding constitution, which requires varying degrees of self-constraint. If this is so, Kant was mistaken in describing the perfect state as one in which mutual opposition is regulated by external laws, requiring for their enforcement an irresistible external power. An additional difficulty is that Kant frequently states that the perfect state facilitates the development of

the moral disposition or the good will, but now it seems that this disposition is a precondition for the achievement of this state. Clearly, morality cannot be both precondition and outcome of a just political order.¹⁸ A third difficulty is that, if a good will is indeed a *sine qua non* for the perfect state, the realization of this state cannot be the work of nature alone; for, as soon as humanity shapes its destiny according to some moral plan, natural history is left behind and rational history has begun. This accords with Kant's explication of the fourth thesis—it is an enlightened and moral mode of thought that must in the final instance make possible a universal legal order—but his explication of the fifth thesis points in the opposite direction. Here Kant suggests not only that “need” has forced human agents to enter imperfect legal arrangements but also that we may hope that “need” will compel them—through the negative effects of unrestrained competition—to form a perfectly just civic constitution, so as to counteract or prevent such effects (see pp. 16–17; 157).

These difficulties raise a fourth problem, mentioned previously, namely, to define what the relation is between the highest political good and the highest moral good. I will focus on all these problems in the next chapter, where I analyze some of Kant's later historical works in which a sharper distinction is drawn between these two goods and in which the scope of the two vehicles of progress (i.e., the cunning of nature and moral praxis) is further specified.

The *seventh thesis* offers an additional reason for holding that the perfect state is the last problem to be solved by humanity:

The problem of establishing a perfect civic constitution is dependent upon the problem of a lawful external relation among states and cannot be solved without a solution of the latter problem (p. 58; 158).

Apparently Kant took this thesis to be evident, for he does not give an argument to support it. Perhaps his argument is that war between the nations leads to revolutions and externally imposed new political regimes. This argument however, shows only that without lasting peace the continuity of perfect states is threatened. Furthermore, there is at least one good reason for holding a view directly opposed to the seventh thesis. As Kant himself later argues in *Peace*:

The republican constitution . . . gives a favorable prospect for the desired consequence, i.e., perpetual peace. The reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared

(and in this constitution it cannot but be the case), nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war (pp. 94–95; VI: 436).

He maintains, therefore, that one road toward perpetual peace is that republican states associate together, gradually spreading their constitutions to other nations and enlarging the federation of states (*ibid.*, pp. 100–01; 441–42). For the sake of consistency, then, the seventh thesis must be modified to state that, without a just international order, the continuity of perfect states, or approximations thereof, is threatened. This suffices to show that the realization of such an order is an urgent matter. Moreover, the thesis in this form is corroborated not only by the fact that war may lead to the external overthrow of republican states but also by the fact that preparation for war threatens just states; as the past has taught, the military often usurps emerging democratic institutions.

In his explication of the seventh thesis, Kant sketches a second road toward the cosmopolitan order, and here his remarks are consistent with his view as developed in *Peace*. This road is built on the basis of tremendous human suffering; it is the road of war. The role of war in establishing peace between the nations is analogous to that of unsocial sociability in achieving the perfect state—concord through discord, unity through opposition. Kant holds that through war, through the never-ending accumulation of weapons, and through constant preparation for war in peacetime, which all ultimately block the development of our capacities, nature forces human beings to make the first tentative attempts to seek international peace. He continues: “finally, after devastation, revolutions, and even complete exhaustion of their inner powers, she [nature] brings them to that which reason could have told them without so much sad experience, namely, to step from the lawless condition of savages into a league of nations” (“Universal History,” pp. 18–19; IV: 159; translation altered).

This statement shows that Kant, contrary to Hegel, does not see human history as an unfolding of reason. It also shows that Kant condemns war on the same ground as unsocial sociability. The regulative principle that guides the assessment of these immoral means of progress is that “[m]oral evil has the intrinsic characteristic of being opposed to and destructive of its own purpose . . . ; thus it gives way to the moral principle of the good, though only through a slow progress” (*Peace*, p. 127; VI: 466; translation altered). War, then, is a great evil, but we may hope that it is

self-destructive and, hence, will bring us peace. In light of past experience it is rational to expect that this will happen, but this does not make war less evil. And, as is also the case for unsocial sociability and its role in bringing about the perfect state, moral reason sees it as its task to make these immoral means unnecessary so as to prevent the "sad experience" of "slow progress."

This condemnation of the immoral means of progress leaves open the question to what extent humanity viewed as a collective is to be blamed for the fact that history has unfolded through such means. Kant seldom directly addresses this question, and, when he does—as, for example, in the "Concluding Remark" of "Conjectural Beginning"—he tends to place the blame too heavily on the shoulders of the human race. Yet the following remarks seem to be consistent with and partly to reflect his over-all view.

It would be equally mistaken to hold that all injustices of the past were caused by factors beyond human control as to claim that humanity is completely responsible for them in a moral sense. Both views are unwarranted and opposed to moral praxis. Ascribing all evils that humanity has suffered throughout history solely to its moral failing, we are likely to conclude that the human race is morally so corrupt that it is senseless to strive for its betterment. The outcome would be that moral action would be limited to the private realm, and even in that realm the inference might be drawn that our moral efforts are in vain. To be sure, Kant's epistemology precludes the drawing of these pessimistic conclusions in full force, but the elimination of their dogmatic character still leaves us with an almost insurmountable impediment to moral action. This view fails to take into account several factors that help to explain past evils, such as the historicity of norms, the difficulty of finding institutional forms that adequately express certain norms, and the burden imposed upon humanity by external nature and the limitations of the human body. An additional factor is that, although human agents make their own history, they do so under circumstances they have not chosen. The past has a great limiting impact on the future, both on the institutional and on the ideological level. In Marx's famous words from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, "[t]he tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."¹⁹ These observations, however, do not imply the correctness of the dictum "tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner." The dictum betrays a dogmatic interpretation of history; for, as Isaiah Berlin points out, its ground is a notion of historical inevitability; moral judgments are alleged

to be senseless and inappropriate because nothing could have been otherwise than it in fact was.²⁰ Indignation and anger, however, do have their proper place in historical reflection; for moral responsibility for past injustices cannot be explained away by factors beyond human control, whether in the name of an alleged "historical necessity," "fate," or the admittedly harsh natural and social conditions from which human agents had, and still have, to emancipate themselves. The possibility of moral and social improvement has always existed, and human agents have always projected norms that transcended their society, making social change imperative. The denial of this amounts to a reification of history—human beings do not make history, but history produces them, and this is a situation that can never be overcome. The second view, then, is as inconsistent with a praxis-oriented philosophy of history, such as Kant's, as the first. Moreover, it is to be noted with respect to the second view that a too facile legitimization of past injustices leads to a legitimization of future ones; in maintaining that the injustices of the past were beyond human control, we are likely to condone those of the future. Finally, we may suspect that both views serve at times as apologies, covering up a lack of preparedness to fulfill one's social duties.

Kant makes some other interesting observations and suggestions under the seventh thesis. He maintains that without a "secret wise guidance in nature" we cannot exclude the possibility that the discord between human agents may lead to the annihilation of civilization. The outcome of history may be a "hell of evils," resulting from "barbarous devastation." At first sight, it may appear that on Kant's own terms the coming about of this possibility is hardly a regrettable event. He declares that "[e]verything good that is not based on a morally good disposition . . . is nothing but pretense and glittering misery," and, moreover, esteems the culture of his own time as primarily a "glittering misery," as is indicated by his statement that Rousseau was not far wrong in preferring the "state of savages" above the stage of human evolution of their own time ("Universal History," p. 21; IV: 161). Can we pride ourselves that our situation is altogether different? What basic reason do we have to regret the return to "barbarism?" For Kant it is the future that provides the answer: such possible return is in the final instance to be regretted only from the perspective of the future union of states, and, ultimately, since this union is only the "halfway mark in the development of mankind," the basic rationale for our (or his) culture is the moral society.

The *eighth thesis* sums up the previous theses:

The history of the human species can be seen, in the large, as the realization of a hidden plan of nature to bring forth an internally, and for this purpose, also an externally perfectly constituted state, as the only condition in which all the capacities of humanity can be fully developed (p. 21; 161–62; translation altered).

Kant says that, thanks to this plan, “philosophy can have her belief in a millennium.” Her millenarianism is not utopian; it has a place because the “Idea can help.” In other words, there are indications that nature is pushing the human race toward the better. Kant emphasizes here one such indication not yet mentioned: the increase in commerce, both in and between states. In order that a state may retain its powerful position among states, or may acquire such a position, it must permit and even stimulate free commercial actions. This means that the state must allow for civil liberties, for the curtailment of these liberties has a negative impact on commercial development. Thus commerce serves the rise of civil liberties, which, in turn, contributes to the emergence of the perfect state and, hence, to peace between the nations. Commerce also contributes in a more direct fashion to peace—the third road toward peace. War interrupts commercial transactions between nations, which is an incentive for maintaining peace. Kant argues that, in order to prevent such interruptions, states will offer themselves as arbiters between feuding groups within the state—national instability leads to international instability—and “thus they will prepare the way for a distant great body politic [*Staatskörper*] for which there is no precedent in world history.”²¹ Similar observations can be made with regard to conflicts between nations.

Nonetheless, Kant did not see the rise of commerce, i.e., the rise of capitalism, as only beneficial to the prospect of peace. In *Peace* he points out that the international credit system creates the possibility of huge investments in war efforts, leading to great national debts. Debt may lead to bankruptcy, which may endanger the economic well-being of even those states not involved in the increasing war preparation. This adds to the already tense international relations, and Kant states, therefore, as a preliminary article for lasting peace that “[n]ational debts shall not be contracted with a view to the external friction of states” (*Peace*, p. 88; VI: 429). Evidently, there are other economic determinants of war, such as the securing of markets and resources, but although Kant is aware of these (as his remarks below on colonialism indicate), they do not translate into other *specifically economic* measures to guarantee international peace. The over-all result is that his proposal for

peace is focused too much on the need for political change, this at the cost of required economic change.²²

The hidden plan of nature must not remain hidden. In revealing the plan, the philosophical historian grounds the hope that humanity is moving toward peace and the perfect state, and thus he stimulates moral action toward these ends. This is important; for although the realization of the "universal cosmopolitan condition" is to be expected only "after many reformative revolutions," it is also the case, Kant notes, that "our own intelligent action may hasten this happy time for our posterity."²³ Accordingly, grounding the hope for progress in a philosophical reconstruction of history is to be seen as a moral task. In the words of the *ninth thesis*:

A philosophical attempt to work out a universal history according to a natural plan directed to achieving the civic union of the human race must be regarded as possible and, indeed, as contributing to this end of nature (p. 23; 164).

This thesis, then, supports the view that Kant's philosophy of history is praxis- and future-oriented.

Kant begins his explication of the ninth thesis by noting that he has offered in "Universal History" only guidelines along which a history of the human species is to be written. The essay exhibits the "Idea" and invites others to write a history of the world in accordance with the "Idea." Kant briefly sketches here the subject matter of such a history. It should start with Greek history (which gives us information concerning more ancient history), study its impact on the Roman state, then turn to Roman influence on their conquerors, and so on down to the nations of eighteenth-century Europe, "which will probably give law, eventually, to all the others." Further, one must focus on the history of the constitutions and their laws as well as on the history of the relations between the nations. Thus one will be able to detect elements that made nations flourish as well as factors that destroyed them. Moreover, one will be able to detect the aspects carried over from one political formation to another. Kant states: "[I]f, I say, one carries through this study, a guiding thread will be revealed." Clearly, this guiding thread has already been exposed in "Universal History": higher forms of the state (and other factors conducive to international peace) have emerged within the historical process, and history aims at the union of perfect states as a precondition for the full development of all our rational capacities. The point of the concrete history, then, seems to be to support further the tenability of the "Idea" and to reveal the finer details of its gradual realization.

This sketch may seem to suggest a "Eurocentrism" in Kant's work, but this would not be a fair assessment. Kant displayed a genuine interest in other cultures, as is manifest in the numerous references in his writings to other cultures, and we cannot blame him for the fact that in his time knowledge of other civilizations was rather limited. Moreover, Kant strongly objected to colonial conquest in the name of the betterment of humanity ("cultural paternalism"), arguing that good intentions "cannot wash away the stains of injustice" (*Justice*, p. 127; VII: 160). In response to colonialism Kant developed the definitive article for perpetual peace that "[t]he right of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality" (*Peace*, p. 102; VI: 443; translation altered). The rights of all people and the autonomy of each political body must be recognized. The right of the stranger is the right of hospitality, not that of plunder. In his discussion of this article, Kant castigates the "commercial states of our part of the world" (i.e., Europe) for engaging in oppression and for treating the inhabitants of conquered lands as counting for "nothing." They spread "famine, rebellion, perfidy, and the whole litany of evils which afflict mankind," and, accordingly, "China and Japan (Nippon), who have had experience with such guests, have wisely refused them entry" (pp. 104–05; 444–45). Kant unmasks with biting criticism the religious zeal accompanying colonial conquest, stating that while the colonial powers "drink injustice like water, they regard themselves as the elect in point of orthodoxy" (p. 105; 446).

Kant ends "Universal History" by briefly discussing the purposes that may be served by a universal history. Minor purposes are that such history clarifies the "confused play of things human," which leads to intellectual satisfaction; that it produces pragmatic knowledge, which is beneficial for governing and anticipating future changes; and that it reminds politicians that they will be remembered only for what they "have contributed to the goal of world-citizenship," a reminder which may direct their ambitions to better ends. The major purpose of a universal history is that it offers a "consoling view of the future." This is significant for social action, in that the expectation of better times facilitates the fulfillment of our duty to seek the perfect state, international peace, and, ultimately, the moral society. Failing to see a plan in history, we may "turn our eyes away from it in disgust" and come to the conclusion that a rational purpose cannot be found in this world, but is to be hoped for only in "another world" (p. 25; IV: 165).

3. Morality and the Idea of Progress: An Alleged Inconsistency

In this section I will deal first with William Galston's contention that Kant's philosophy of history is inconsistent with his ethics because it implies that numerous agents are unwittingly a mere means for progress. I will use consideration of Galston's objection as an occasion for outlining briefly some basic differences between Kant's and Hegel's philosophies of history, a discussion which will be important for my analysis in Chapter VII of the Hegelian elements in Marx. Next, I will turn to Hannah Arendt's claim that Kant's notion of historical progress conflicts with his idea of human dignity. I will end this section by analyzing the paradox of anamnestic solidarity and its ramifications for present moral action toward the ideal society. What these three problems have in common is that, if they are genuine and unresolvable problems, they undermine the rationale of Kant's philosophical reconstruction of history: the grounding of hope for the sake of morality. Accordingly, these problems seem to be significant for any philosophy of praxis, but we will see later in our discussion of Marx that Marx either ignored them or addressed them rather superficially and with a certain moral insensitivity.

The Hegelian Lens: A Misinterpretation of Kant's Philosophy of History

Galston's claim that Kant's philosophy of history is inconsistent with his moral viewpoint is based on the premise that Kant seeks to offer a justification of history in the manner of Hegel—a theodicy.²⁴ Once this premise is accepted the objection is well taken, but, as my commentary on "Universal History" has already indicated, the premise is unwarranted: Galston looks at Kant through a Hegelian lens.²⁵

This mistake can be found often in the literature on Kant's philosophy of history. Perhaps one factor that explains this is that Kant's claim that we may see history as having a rational plan can be confused with the claim that history is rational. Another factor that seems to play a role is that Hegel, in his lectures on the philosophy of history, largely followed the outline of a political world history which had been sketched by Kant under the ninth thesis of "Universal History." Thus it has seemed that Kant's philosophy of history was a mere anticipation of Hegel's. A final con-

sideration is that Kant occasionally suggests that he is concerned with a justification of history. In the closing section of "Universal History," for example, he states that to present "a consoling view of the future," as derived from past history, is to give "a justification of nature—or, better of Providence." He continues in rhetorical fashion: "[W]hat 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 stage of supreme wisdom which contains the purpose of all others—the history of mankind—must remain an unceasing reproach to it?" (p. 25; IV: 165) What are we to make of such remarks? Should we, after all, conclude that the hidden plan of nature is a divine plan?

There is only one sense in which Kant's critical thought permits an affirmative answer to this last question. The plan of nature is divine in that it accords with the moral law; it is a rational plan that seeks to ground hope for progress. Or we may say that the ends set by the plan—the perfect state and international peace—reflect divine (i.e., moral) intention. The plan is not, however, divine in the sense that a higher cause is operative within human history, pushing humanity toward these ends. To make a claim to this effect would transcend the limits of reason proposed in Kant's epistemology.²⁶ It is in this vein that Kant, after a careful discussion of the idea of providence in relation to history, concludes in *Peace* that "[t]he use of the word 'nature' is more fitting to the limits of human reason and more modest than an expression indicating a providence unknown to us" (p. 108; VI: 448–49). Further, the very idea that we can know that a divine cause is operative in human history conflicts with the main tenet of Kant's notion of faith. Faith expresses trust, not knowledge, and, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Kant holds that any attempt to explain the "ways of God" is not only doomed to failure but also antithetical to faith and morality. His use of terms such as 'providence' and 'wisdom' with regard to history, then, is to be understood as just a manner of speech, reflecting the common discourse of his time. Again, wisdom is to be found not in history but in the reconstruction thereof and in the intent of this reconstruction. By the same token, what Kant misleadingly calls his "justification of nature" is not in any sense a theodicy, but a claim to the effect that it is rational to see history as grounding hope. What is justified is the view that belief in progress is tenable, the rationale of which is to spur moral action so that human history will at last become a rational history (and thus live up to divine commands).

Hegel, to the contrary, declares that "Reason governs the

world, and has consequently governed its history."²⁷ He explains that his philosophy of history "aims at realizing the conviction that what was *intended* by eternal wisdom, is actually *accomplished* in the domain of existent, active Spirit, as well as in that of mere Nature." Hegel continues: "Our mode of treating the subject is, in this aspect, a Theodicaea—a justification of the ways of God— . . . so that the ill that is found in the World may be comprehended, and the thinking Spirit reconciled with the fact of the existence of evil" (p. 15). To his credit, Hegel never sought to base this reconciliation on a denial of the tremendous amount of suffering embedded in history. As he said in famous passages, "History [is] the slaughterbench at which the happiness of peoples, the wisdom of States, and the virtue of individuals have been victimized" (p. 21), and "[t]he History of the World is not the theatre of happiness" (p. 26). Rather, "[p]eriods of happiness are blank pages in it, for they are periods of harmony—periods when the antithesis is in abeyance" (pp. 26–27). Acceptance of historical evils, then, is grounded in the realization that such evils are necessary moments in the dialectical unfolding of the good. History becomes lifeless without the "antithesis" (opposition), and what is significant and enjoyable about history is not happiness but the activity of the Spirit or Reason,²⁸ an activity which Hegel sees as leading to higher forms of human freedom rooted in the state.

Moral reason abhors this claim that the evolution of freedom necessarily encompasses the terror of negation, both in the past and future, and, accordingly, Hegel argues that moral categories have no place within history

[T]he history of the World occupies a higher ground than that on which morality has properly its position; which is personal character—the conscience of individuals—their particular will and mode of action; *these* have a value, imputation, reward or punishment proper to themselves. What the absolute aim of Spirit requires and accomplishes—what Providence does—transcends the obligations, and the liability to imputation and the ascription of good or bad motives, which attach to individuality in virtue of its social relations (*The Philosophy of History* pp. 66–67).

Thus Hegel continues to argue that the "litany of private virtues" must not be raised against those who shape by way of violence and selfish aims the destiny of humanity—the world-historical individuals—and that persons who on such grounds have resisted the stream of history display "only a formal rectitude—deserted by the living Spirit and by God."

Hegel is even more critical of those persons who condemn the course of history not on the basis of individual morality but in light of social and moral ideals, who “contrast unfavorably things as they *are*, with their idea of things as they *ought* to be” and who adopt “a position not merely of discontent, but of an open revolt against the actual condition of the world” (p. 35). Their actions are not truly real (*wirklich*) and reflect the immature discontent of youth (p. 36).²⁹ The older and tolerant mind, on the other hand, taught by the “grave experience of life,” is aware that what ought to be is realizing itself in history, not through the vain politics of abstract morality, but through the politics of power and self-interest, within and between states. Hegel launches several other objections against moral idealism in its various forms. He maintains that such an attitude to the world involves a subjectivism that undermines the stability of the state, that it prevents real understanding of the rational core of existing social and political institutions (the ethical life as embodied in customs, the family, civil society, and, notably, the state), and that it may lead to repression designed to bring reality into accordance with the ideal—Hegel’s prime example here is the regime of terror of the French Revolution.³⁰ A final objection is the following:

One word more about giving instruction as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes to the scene too late to give it. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed. . . . The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.³¹

What the youthful moral idealist fails to see, then, is that reflection (*Nachdenken*) is afterthought. Hegel sums up his view in making clear that the older and tolerant mind is the philosophical mind: “The insight then to which—in contradistinction from those ideals—philosophy is to lead us, is that the real world is as it ought to be—that the truly good—the universal divine reason—is not a mere abstraction, but a vital principle capable of realizing itself” (*The Philosophy of History*, p. 36).

Some of Hegel’s criticisms of moral idealism raise significant issues, but their intended primary target—Kant’s practical philosophy—escapes them. Kant recognizes the need for mediation, as his historical essays show, and we will see in Chapter V that he sharply rejects the politics of moral terrorism, in which evil means are seen as justified in light of the moral end or in which repres-

sion is unintentionally imposed out of enthusiasm for the good. (His alternative is a "moral politics," in which the means reflect the moral end.) Besides, it seems implausible to maintain with regard to Kant's political ideals that "[p]hilosophy . . . always comes to the scene too late." (In fairness, Hegel bases his generalization on the more plausible example of Plato's *Republic*, although even here we may see Kant's Plato discussion in the first *Critique* as an interesting "reply.") My present main concern, however, is not to address Hegel's objections to Kant's practical thought but to point out some basic differences between their respective philosophies of history.

A crucial consequence of Hegel's justification of history is that his philosophical system lacks an evaluative perspective that is logically independent of the course of history. (Morality insofar as it is critical is delegated to the private realm.) His well-known statement that "the history of the world . . . is the world's court of judgment" is the logical outcome of his view that "what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not 'without God,' but is essentially His Work."³² The crux of the matter is that Hegel's philosophical system permits no answer to the question of how to determine what is essential (i.e., instantiates what ought to be) or accidental ("idle" existence) other than to look at the course of history.³³ The judgment is not with us but with the march of dialectical reason. Accordingly, it is not surprising that Hegel condoned the ruthless imperialism of his day, declaring that civilized nations have the right to treat the autonomy of "barbarians" as "only a formality," for, quite obviously, the activity of the Spirit was on the side of the "civilized" nations (see *Philosophy of Right*, p. 219). And, to give one more example of the negative side of the dialectic, noting that throughout human history war has spurred the development of human capacities, Hegel rejects the idea of perpetual peace as opposed to the "ethical health" of the nations (the Spirit needs opposition for its progressive unfolding) (see *ibid.*, p. 210).

Here, then, we see a first difference between Kant's and Hegel's philosophy of history. They both maintain that the mechanisms of mere self-interest and power struggle push humanity to higher levels, but, whereas Kant condemns such historical processes from an independently formed evaluative perspective, Hegel holds them to be essentially and inherently rational. In other words, only Kant's critical teleological interpretation of history, as opposed to Hegel's dogmatic understanding of the idea of progress, is critical also in a social-moral sense. Note, moreover,

that, even at those points where Kant detects a "moral cause" operative in humanity, it would be incorrect from his perspective to speak of history as reason incarnate; rather, we should say that history here is gradually approaching the infinite ideal of practical reason. (Hegel calls this "bad infinity," contrasting it with his own notion of "good infinity," in which the infinite unites the finite from within.) In short, Hegel is making what Kant declares to be the most serious of all moral-philosophical mistakes, namely, "to derive the laws prescribing what *ought to be done* from what *is done*, or to impose upon them the limits by which the latter is circumscribed" (*Pure Reason*, p. 313; III: 259).

In a sense, however, this is saying too much; for, although Hegel frequently made political recommendations on the basis of his understanding of the course of history, he also maintained that it is not, and cannot be, the task of philosophy to offer such recommendations. Shlomo Avineri observes: "An intriguing paradox is thus presented by Hegel: those who make history [notably, the world-historical figures who are motivated only by their own aims] do not understand it, and those who understand it do not (and should not) make it. At the end of Hegel's long road, consciousness and action, subject and object, doer and knower, are still separate and the tension between them has not been *aufgehoben*."³⁴ And, to push this point a bit further, Hegel contends that the aim of his philosophy of history is to make us feel at home in the world, overcoming the alienation that we may initially experience in reflecting on its course: "Here is the rose [reason incarnate], dance thou here [enjoy present reality]."³⁵ Unlike Kant's philosophy of history, then, Hegel's is not praxis-oriented. The perspective of the spectator in Hegel is superior to and has no consequences for the perspective of the actor, whereas in Kant these perspectives are regulatively united in the duty to promote the highest good. A final main difference between their respective philosophies of history is that only Kant's is future-oriented, as is clear from the reason that Hegel provides for holding that philosophy cannot instruct the world as it ought to be, to wit, that philosophy is afterthought. This difference also follows from the logic of Hegel's philosophy. Hegel maintains that Spirit becomes aware of itself as Spirit within his system and that this self-consciousness is the absolute aim of Spirit; thus its journey is essentially completed.³⁶

To come back to Galston's objection, it can now readily be seen that his charge of inconsistency is mistaken. History indeed uses many human agents as a mere means—this is captured by the idea of the cunning of nature—but Kant does not condone history in

this form, nor is he forced to do so on the basis of his philosophical position, as Hegel is. The inconsistency is to be found not in Kant but in historical reality, and Kant's social ethics for this reason consistently seeks to change the reality.

Human Dignity in the Face of (Infinite) Progress

Arendt poses a more important dilemma. The issue is no longer that "fate drags the unwilling" but that the "willing" are crushed in their dignity once they face the idea of the (infinite) progress of humanity. Or, at least, this is what I take to be the ultimate significance of Arendt's criticism that Kant's notion of (infinite) progress conflicts with his idea of human dignity.

Recall the passage I cited in section 2 above, which states her criticism. Arendt claims that Kant's notion of dignity involves the demand that the human person "be seen . . . in his particularity and, as such, be seen—but without any comparison and independent of time—as reflecting mankind in general." She then argues that the idea of progress, and, in particular, that of infinite progress, precludes our perception of the human agent along these lines, supporting her contention with the statement that the idea of infinite progress implies that "[t]here is no point at which we might stand still and look back with the backward glance of the historian."

Precisely what the ground is of Arendt's criticism is unclear, because she does not explain here what she means by "the backward glance of the historian." We may begin our interpretation of her criticism by briefly turning to Ronald Beiner's long Interpretive Essay on her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Beiner argues that Arendt holds that one important task of the historian is to rescue from the oblivion of history those "miraculous" episodes in which "hope flickered briefly," such as the revolutionary councils of the Paris Commune, the soviets of 1905 and 1917, the German councils of 1918–19, and the Hungarian uprising of 1956 (p. 127; the examples are from Arendt's *On Revolution*). Beiner does not tell us in so many words what it is that makes these events into "miracles" of history, but we may infer that their significance is not political success, for, as he himself notes, in terms of success these collective actions failed (which may be true even if we take as our measure their long-range effects); rather, their value must be sought in that they demonstrate that voluntary human cooperation is possible, reflecting the ideal of a truly cooperative society, and that human dignity can be upheld even under the most adverse

sociopolitical circumstances—that is, the refusal to be treated as means only. Thus it is fitting that Beiner adds the Warsaw Ghetto resistance to the above list of hope-giving historical episodes, citing the memorable words of Ari Willner of the Jewish Combat Group (December 1942): “Not one of us will leave here alive. We are fighting not to save our lives but for human dignity.”

Beiner continues by stating that, for Arendt, rescuing these unique episodes from the oblivion of history is important because it salvages “a portion of human dignity, which would otherwise be denied to the participants in these doomed causes.” He interprets Arendt as maintaining that the historian therefore must “illuminate the universal [reflected in the historical event] without thereby reducing the particular to universals.” Thus the event “is able to take on universal meaning while *retaining* its particularity, which is not the case when the particular serves merely to indicate a historical ‘trend’” (p. 127).³⁷ Beiner further explicates this point by saying that the judgment of the historian “is more decisive for the securing of human dignity than even the absolute fulfillment of history, as envisioned by Hegel or Marx, would be. Not History, but the historian, is the ultimate judge.” The upshot, then, is that, in order to uphold the dignity of the participants in the “miracles” of history, the historian must, on Arendt’s account, assess their efforts and, hence, the events themselves, not merely in terms of their effective contribution to progress (“History is the judge”) but rather as mirroring ideal humanity (the “universal”). Or, more generally, the “backward glance of the historian” is one in which the actions of morally committed historical actors are not merely gauged on the basis of political success—this would degrade these actors to the status of “historical instruments,” robbing them of their dignity—but rather are esteemed as reflecting humanity as it ought to be.

Thus far it seems that the point of Arendt’s criticism is that Kant’s notion of (infinite) progress implies that the morally committed persons of the past are to be viewed as mere means for bringing about the moral society. Now, provided that Kant’s notion of (infinite) progress has in fact this consequence, it is to be admitted that that notion would conflict with his idea of human dignity. For Kant, it is the *colegislative* or noumenal self, which exemplifies humanity as it ought to be, that gives human beings unconditional worth, i.e., dignity. Hence, his ethics demands that those who have sought humanity as it ought to be and thus have displayed dignity in their actions are not retroactively reduced to mere means for progress, having conditional worth only.³⁸ Before we assess the

cogency of Arendt's criticism in this form, however, let me propose a broader meaning we can ascribe to her over-all criticism. Returning to her closing statement that the idea of infinite progress implies that "[t]here is no point at which we might stand still and look back with the backward glance of the historian," it seems that on her account the role of the judging spectator is not limited to the historian proper but must also be ascribed to the actor. Thus the broader—and, in terms of moral praxis, more important—problem emerges that the question is not only whether the idea of (infinite) progress precludes upholding the dignity of the actors in past historical events but whether the actors themselves can maintain (or experience) dignity in the face of the (infinite) progress of the human species. What reason do those who seek the betterment of humanity—whether in the past, present, or future—have *not* to view their efforts and themselves as mere instruments for progress?

This still leaves open the question of what makes, for Arendt, *infinite* progress so objectionable, as compared to the idea of historical progress toward a definite end. Her use of the metaphor of history as a story suggests the following interpretation. The idea of infinite progress means that the story has no end, and, hence, the pages (the actors or their self-understanding) cannot be so written (by the historians or the actors) that they anticipate and reflect the end. Thus dignity is undermined on both counts: the Kantian actors are not able to experience dignity, nor can the Kantian historians salvage their dignity from the (endless) oblivion of history. Yet it is to be observed that this problem also is embedded in the idea of progress in general (at least, if Arendt's criticism is correct—and notice that she switches from one conception of progress to the other in her criticism of Kant). For the very idea of progress, if it means more than change and improvement of the world, as Arendt puts it, includes the idea of moral progress and, hence, of a changing conception of ideal humanity; with the result that the actors are seen as lacking, or falling short of, ideal humanity once a new conception evolves within history. The actors, being aware of this, may conclude that their dignity rests on an illusion, unable to pass the test of time. At best, they can console themselves with the idea that their time is not infinite; they may hope that they have developed a correct, i.e., timeless, conception of humanity, but this hope is rendered groundless by the idea of infinite progress.

I think that all the above objections raised against Kant's notion of (infinite) progress fail to refute the tenability of this notion,

but show instead that Kant in his historical writings did not sufficiently attempt to relate humanity as an ideal concept to humanity as the subject of history (i.e., humanity as an empirical notion).³⁹ My rebuttal of Arendt will proceed in three brief steps. I will argue first that, since the relation between morally committed individuals and the human species as historical subject is mediated by humanity as an ideal concept, Kantian actors and historians share a common ideal, which secures the dignity of the actors irrespective of their specific historical location, both from their own perspective and from that of the historians. I will then show that Kant's discussion of the moral significance of the French Revolution accords with this analysis, and, to complete my rebuttal, I will offer an interpretation of the idea of infinite progress which encompasses the notion of a changing conception of ideal humanity and yet preserves human dignity.

The third formula of the categorical imperative states: "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only." I have previously stressed that this formula implies that it is our social duty to seek the moral order, or humanity as it ought to be. Here two other aspects need to be emphasized. First, the formula places a constraining condition upon the manner in which we ought to seek the moral order, in that our maxims must be consistent with the idea of this order. In other words, social actions undertaken to bring the existing social totality closer to the moral ideal must reflect this ideal—that is, the means must reflect the end. To turn to one of Beiner's (Arendt's) examples, the German councils of 1918–19, Ernst Toller, one of the leaders of the last phase of the Munich Revolution, expressed the Kantian position quite well when he said: "We were demanding humanity, and we had to show humanity ourselves."⁴⁰ Second, in acting in accordance with the idea of the moral order, as the third formula commands us to do, we are, as it were, participating in the idea of humanity or the moral species. This participation is best seen as setting a task; it is the same task as bridging the gap between the phenomenal self and the noumenal self. On the collective and historical level, this task consists of the duty of the human species as historical subject to approximate the moral species—their unification is the moral society.

Setting aside for the moment the fact that Kant's notion of (infinite) progress includes that of a changing conception of ideal humanity, it follows from the above observations that this notion does not conflict with his idea of human dignity. The source of

dignity is participation in the idea of humanity, and the constraining condition embedded in the third formula guarantees that the Kantian actor has good grounds for dignity; it signifies his attempt to live up to the standards of the colegislative self. Thus morally committed persons of present and future generations, including the historians, share a common ideal—or we may even say that they all participate in the same idea of humanity; they are, as it were, members of the moral species, and, as such, they share a common dignity. This view can also be phrased in a more nominalistic version. The task of bringing the human species closer to the moral ideal encompasses members of many generations. All the individuals who make this task their own share the moral ideal, and to esteem their actions merely in terms of their effective contribution to historical progress (“History is the judge”) contradicts this ideal of universal good will. The reason is this: Kant holds that the good will “is good only because of its willing” and that if this will after “the greatest effort should not . . . achieve anything of its end,” it still “would sparkle like a jewel in its own right” (*Foundations*, p. 10; IV: 250).

There is, of course, nothing to prevent a historian from putting the efforts of morally committed agents of past generations solely in consequentialist terms. The point is simply that such a historian is not a Kantian historian. Kant’s own discussion of the moral meaning of the French Revolution underlines this; for we have seen that he maintains that the expected failure of this event does not lessen its ultimate value of demonstrating that a moral cause is operative in the human species. Admittedly, Kant seeks to illuminate the universal in the spectators of the Revolution—their enthusiasm is comprehended as directed toward republican ideals and even toward the moral society itself—rather than in the behavior of the actors. But recall that this argument for progress is based on the premise that the spectators will sooner or later act out of enthusiasm for those ideals, following the example set by the actors. Thus Kant indirectly illuminates the universal in the actions of the participants of the French Revolution, upholding their dignity in the face of anticipated political failure.⁴¹ More specifically, in his argument for progress Kant expresses the hope and trust that the Revolution itself, even if it turns out to be without lasting political success, will be remembered by future generations, leading to a repetition on their side of the efforts of the participants of the French Revolution “on any favorable occasion” (see “An Old Question,” section 7). This remembering secures the dignity of the actors, in that the actors and the spectators share a common vision

and intention, namely, to realize republican ideals as setting the stage for progress toward the moral society. To be sure, this remembering has a consequentialist dimension, but this does not undermine dignity. The opposite is even true; for morally committed persons want to be means for bringing about progress, and to deny this is to rob them of their dignity. After all, they see it as their duty to bring the human species closer to the moral ideal, and if we fail to take seriously their efforts in this direction we neglect the source of their unconditional worth. What these persons do not want to be—and what Kant's argument for progress does not make them—is means *only*.

The idea of infinite progress in Kant's practical work has three aspects, two of which have already received adequate attention, namely, that progress is always possible, even in the moral society, in terms of motivation (the task of transforming the virtuous disposition into a holy will) and in terms of enhancing one another's ends. Neither of these two forms of infinite progress poses a problem with regard to human dignity, for they do not involve the notion of a changing conception of ideal humanity. The primary target of Arendt's criticism seems to be the third form of infinite progress: we can always come to a better comprehension of what the ramifications are of the moral law, which is to say that we must believe that we can always come to a more adequate formulation of what the notion of ideal humanity or the moral society exactly encompasses. This regulative idea is insufficiently pronounced in Kant's practical thought; for, although he describes past history as progressing toward a better understanding of the moral ideal, with the Enlightenment as a turning point, his discussion of future progress focuses on the hope for progress in terms of an increasing interest in the moral ideal, i.e., progress in intention. More emphatically than Kant did, then, we should admit to the practical system the idea that our conception of ideal humanity always leaves room for improvement—moral truth sets an infinite task. The rationale of this idea is similar to that of the two other forms of infinite progress: to prevent any premature claim that the task is finished. Moreover, the notion that we can come to a more adequate formulation of the moral ideal is imperative from the perspective of my later argument that Cohen's socialist interpretation of the community of legislators is a step forward from Kant's view. This type of change, however, must not be exaggerated, for what appears as moral change may in reality be an application of the same moral ideas to new sociopolitical conditions.

Accordingly, it is to be noted, in reply to Arendt's criticism,

that the idea of humanity seems sufficiently continuous to enable us to uphold the dignity of actors in past historical events, even while recognizing that their conception of ideal humanity is in some respects different from ours. A more important consideration is that sharing an ideal does not necessarily involve agreement about all the aspects and consequences of that ideal. This is certainly so for the Kantian ideal; for disagreement may arise in the community of legislators, underlining the open character of this ideal. For one thing, although each of the members of the moral society will seek universal rules and ends, there may be disagreement about which rules and ends fit this characterization. For another thing, there may be disagreement about the application of rules to specific situations and about the ends that should be pursued in these situations. (The unattractive alternative is to see the categorical imperative as a foolproof decision procedure, to be applied in mechanical fashion.) But in either case, disagreements will be settled in a rational democratic fashion, guided by our recognition of one another as legislators and by the intent to promote one another's ends. Now the import of these observations is that we can counterfactually include the morally committed actors of past historical events in the future community of legislators, implying that they would share its main principles and be prepared to settle disagreements, such as what the idea of humanity precisely involves, along its guidelines.⁴² The tenability of their inclusion shows that the dignity of these actors can be upheld. It also shows that these actors can uphold their dignity in the face of the idea of a changing notion of ideal humanity. Finally, this further specification of my earlier defended contention that morally committed persons can participate in the idea of humanity suggests that we should reverse Arendt's view concerning the respective impact of infinite progress and progress as such on human dignity. Only the idea of infinite progress guarantees that the dialogue that aims at moral truth will always be open, creating the continuous possibility of *meaningful* participation for all those who seek to contribute to it.

The Paradox of Anamnestic Solidarity

In *Wissenschaftstheorie-Handlungstheorie-Fundamentale Theologie*, Helmut Peukert⁴³ argues that from the perspective of the society of complete solidarity, i.e., the moral society, the following problem arises:

By definition this generation is liberated; it has reached the final happy condition. . . . But how must we interpret its relation to preceding generations? They must live with the awareness that they have reached their condition solely thanks to these generations and, hence, solely thanks to the oppressed, the defeated, and the sacrifices of preceding liberation processes. . . . Can one even imagine happiness under these conditions? Does happiness not presuppose that the unhappiness of the predecessors be forgotten? . . . However, when world-historical unawareness is the presupposition for a happy life, is then the life of these human beings not inhuman? (p. 281).

Peukert thinks that the last question is to be answered in the affirmative. The outcome is what he calls the "paradox of anamnestic solidarity": the members of the moral society cannot forget the suffering of the victims of injustice, for in doing so they would lose their humanity, and this contradicts the idea of the moral society; but if they remember this suffering with a feeling of compassion (anamnestic solidarity), this seems to contradict the idea of the moral society as well, for solidarity in this form threatens their happiness.

Peukert suggests that the paradox has a wider meaning in that it makes the idea of "complete justice" into a mere illusion (p. 282). Jürgen Habermas in "A Reply to My Critics"⁴⁴ elaborates this suggestion:

If one does not constrict the universality of the unlimited community in communication to one's contemporaries, but counterfactually includes past generations in the circle of those without whose potential agreement the claim to justice could not be vindicated, this may be sufficient for the *logic* of practical discourse. But the posthumously obtained approval of the victims remains abstract . . . it cannot later drown out the protest expressed in their lifetimes. . . . The contradiction that is inherent in the idea of complete justice, owing to its principle of irredeemable universalism, cannot be dissolved. . . . Those born later can compensate for the contradiction contained in the idea itself only by supplementing the abstract thought of universality with . . . compassionate solidarity with the despair of the tormented who have suffered what cannot be made good again (pp. 246–47).

To explicate, Habermas holds that "a norm is valid only if it would meet the approval of those involved under conditions of discursive will-formation" (p. 246). Now, by extending the community in communication to past generations, he maintains that a just so-

ciety requires that the victims of injustice of past generations give in a counterfactual manner their approval to this society. Expecting their approval to be forthcoming, Habermas nonetheless views their suffering as a stain on the just society, arguing that the idea of complete justice is internally contradictory.

This claim seems to rest on equivocation. The idea of complete justice may be understood in two ways. The moral society is a completely just society in the sense that every rational agent, irrespective of his historical location, would approve of its norms, or, at least, of the manner in which its norms are established. But the moral society as a historical ideal is not completely just in the sense that it literally comprises all those who adhere, or would wish to adhere, to its rules; the victims of injustice of past generations are excluded, not in principle but as a matter of historical contingency. Equivocating on the term 'complete justice', Habermas suggests that the moral society cannot be completely just in the first sense. This suggestion is misguided; for the very fact that the road toward the moral society is full of injustice does not make this society less just—provided, of course, that the members of this society are not responsible for these injustices.

Another objection that may be raised against Habermas is that his discussion of the problem set by the irredeemable character of the suffering of the victims of injustice is wrongly focused. The same can be said of Peukert. This is remarkable, because they both base themselves partly on the work of Max Horkheimer, citing a passage from his work in the 1930s which shows that the problem has more important ramifications than posing an *aporia* for the idea of the moral society itself. Horkheimer wrote:

The thought that the prayers of the persecuted in direst need, that those of the innocents who must die without clarification of their situation, that the final hopes for a superhuman authority, are to no avail, and that the night in which no human light shines is also devoid of any divine light, is monstrous. Without God, eternal truth has just as little a foothold as infinite love—indeed they become unthinkable concepts. But is atrocity ever a cogent argument against the assertion or denial of a state of affairs? Does logic contain a law to the effect that a judgment is false when its consequences would be despair?⁴⁵

In his early writings Horkheimer held that we must face this monstrous thought, declaring that "[p]ast injustice has happened and is final. The defeated are really defeated."⁴⁶ But in his later work he somewhat modified his view, cautiously affirming theology and defining it as "the hope that things will not stop with this injustice

by which our world is characterized, that injustice may not be the last word. [It is] the expression of . . . the longing that the murderer will not triumph over the innocent victim."⁴⁷

The more comprehensive paradox of anamnestic solidarity, then, concerns *present* social action toward the moral ideal. Kant argues that we must turn to history in order to ground the hope for progress, but the other side of the coin is that in doing so we are confronted with the immense suffering embedded in history. Now anamnestic solidarity with the victims of injustice of past generations may have a positive moral effect in that it makes us more susceptible to present socially caused suffering, strengthening our determination to eliminate this suffering. Moreover, this kind of solidarity may also more directly affirm our conviction that we ought to seek the moral society; for, following Habermas's counterfactual procedure, we may assume that the victims of injustice would urge us to seek a just society, making their suffering not altogether in vain. Yet the belief that their suffering is final and that they died not knowing whether their outcry against repression would be answered may be too much to face and may bring us to despair. This despair may weaken the resolve to change society, and so the over-all result may be that the turn to history for the sake of moral praxis undermines this praxis.

I have already indirectly discussed the paradox in this form in the final section of the previous chapter, so let me be brief but also add some additional considerations. Two basic answers seem to accord with the general orientation of Kant's social ethics. The first is practical faith. Moral faith in this context is not so much a reply to the question: What may I—for myself—hope? as a reply to the question: What may I—for others, in their suffering and death—hope?⁴⁸ Thus practical faith is an expression of the hope that the suffering of the victims of repression is not final; the regulative idea that guides faith, at least for Kant, is that virtue and happiness will somehow meet. Adherence to this idea prevents our anamnestic solidarity from leading to despair. The second basic answer is to turn the argument around. The finality of human suffering does not weaken the resolve to seek a just society, but strengthens it; the very fact that this suffering cannot be redeemed makes it so much the more urgent to seek a society without suffering caused by social conflict.

My own view tends to the second answer, because practical faith lacks an adequate philosophical foundation. It is to be recognized, however, that this view nonetheless carries with it the danger that despair may be the outcome of compassion for the victims

of injustice. The solution is that we can fight against despair, since (anamnestic) solidarity is a practical feeling mediated by the moral law. Once our co-suffering threatens to overwhelm us—and in this respect it is immaterial whether the concern is anamnestic solidarity or solidarity with present suffering—the moral law demands that we turn our back on it; for despair may keep us from fulfilling our social duties. (Kant holds for a similar reason that we have an indirect duty to be happy.) Although this seems to involve an element of forgetting, it does not follow that we have thus denied our solidarity with the victims of injustice. Rather, this forgetting is done partly for their sake, for our primary obligation to them is not just to remember them but in their name to seek a just society. More emphatically, the idea of anamnestic solidarity seems to be empty if it does not comprise the resolve to erase once and for all the sources of their repression. We may say, then, that the scar of despair is a scar of moral determination.

The first answer also involves an element of forgetting, albeit for a different reason. In order that virtue and happiness may meet for the victims of injustice, the victims must to some extent forget what has been done to them, for without this forgetting they cannot be happy. The mere passing of time alone cannot heal their wounds; what is broken can be made whole again only if the victims of injustice engage in a deliberate effort to forget their agony to some degree. It is this partial forgetting that enables those who adhere to the second answer to forget to some extent as well. Thus the two answers share a common element of forgetting; but this is not surprising, for we are simply not able to embrace all the suffering embedded in history without losing our sanity and moral determination. Yet there is this difference: the first answer offers us a forgetting of consolation, the second, one of inner repression only.

Finally, in reply to Peukert's form of the paradox of anamnestic solidarity, I wish to make the following observations. First, this paradox does not have the great relevance Peukert ascribes to it as long as it is not related to present social action toward the moral society. Second, anamnestic solidarity in the moral society may be less incongruent with happiness than Peukert takes it to be, provided that happiness is defined as a harmony of ends rather than as an accumulation of pleasant feelings. But even if we grant that anamnestic solidarity conflicts with human happiness, this does not in itself undermine the idea of the moral society. This society is best characterized as a community of colegislators who seek to enhance one another's ends, and, this idea does not exclude

all forms of human suffering as inconsistent with itself. Human dignity and autonomy are essential to the idea of the moral society, happiness less so. Last, it is not at all clear what the ground is for the contention that anamnestic solidarity must be an aspect of the moral society. The paradox has in this context relevance for present moral action, for it raises the question of why we ought to remember the victims of injustice. I have claimed that the primary moral significance of this remembering must be sought in increasing our susceptibility for feeling compassion for the present victims of injustice, in addition to giving rise to the moral determination to seek a just society in the name of those whose voices of protest and suffering have been silenced by human terror. Once the moral society has been firmly established, however, and morality has become second nature, as it were, guaranteeing perpetual social peace, these grounds for the duty to remember the victims of injustice seem no longer to apply. So should we conclude that there is a point at which it becomes morally permissible to forget those victims? Our notion of gratitude revolts against the claim that at the end of history it will become morally permissible to forget those who have struggled for the betterment of humanity. The pursuit of knowledge, moreover, might prevent humanity from ever taking this step; but still (and paradoxical as this may sound) would the forgetting of the suffering and sacrifices of morally committed persons of past generations itself not be an appropriate expression of the gratitude of the members of the moral society? Would this forgetting not accord with the wishes of these morally committed individuals? Would they also not hold that their claim to dignity has been adequately satisfied once humanity permanently realizes that which essentially mattered to them? And would the victims of injustice in general not ask us to forget them for the sake of our own happiness, once we have permanently eliminated the sources of their repression? Perhaps all these questions are to be answered in the negative, but then the unhappiness derived from anamnestic solidarity will be compensated for by the moral satisfaction arising from the fact that the duty to remember has been fulfilled in the best possible manner in which this duty can be fulfilled: by seeking the moral society in the name of the uncountable victims of injustice throughout history.

CHAPTER IV

The Philosophy of History (B): The Cunning of Nature, The Highest Political Good, and the Moral Society

In “Universal History” Kant does not yet draw a clear distinction between the highest political good (the perfect state and international peace) and the highest moral good (the moral society or community of colegislators). Accordingly, it remains unclear what precisely the scope is of the cunning of nature. Can the mechanisms of self-interest alone force human beings into the condition of political peace, or is moral action, i.e., the good will, in principle also required to accomplish this end? Both answers are given in “Universal History,” although the first predominates.

Judgment offers a clarification of the issue, for it draws a distinction between the ultimate end (*der letzte Zweck*) of nature and the final end (*der Endzweck*) of creation. Kant maintains that culture—including the legal order and international peace—is the ultimate end of nature and has the purpose of setting the stage for the moral society as the final end of creation. I will interpret this to mean that Kant holds that we may hope that through cultural development the motive of self-interest alone will suffice for bringing about the highest political good as a preparatory step toward the highest moral good, which is the exclusive domain of the good will and moral praxis.

An additional difference between "Universal History" and the third *Critique* is that, in the former, lust for power and need for recognition as aspects of unsocial sociability are emphasized as forces of historical change, whereas, in the latter, "material" factors such as survival, division of labor, and exploitation are stressed as instrumental in pushing humanity toward the institutionalization of higher forms of the political state. The two analyses, however, do not conflict with each other, but may be seen as complementary.

To illuminate these differences, in the first section below I will briefly discuss paragraphs 82–86 of *Judgment*. In the second section I will argue that Kant's regulative thesis: that the cunning of nature suffices to bring about the highest political good, is mistaken, deriving my argument from John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. I will end the chapter with a systematic analysis of the relation between the highest political good and the highest moral good, addressing, among other issues, the question of the institutionalization of the moral society itself (section 3).

1. *Critique of Judgment*: The Ultimate End of Nature and the Final End of Creation

Kant opens paragraph 82 of *Judgment* by stating that, by *external purposiveness*, as distinguished from the internal purposiveness of organisms, he means "that by which one thing of nature serves another as means to a purpose." Inquiry into external purposiveness, then, raises, the question, What is this natural thing good for? Posing this question in reference to the "kingdom of plants," Kant argues that the external purpose of plants is to serve as food for the herbivorous animals. The latter in turn have as their function the sustenance of carnivorous animals. Kant continues: "Finally we have the question: What are these last, as well as the first-mentioned natural kingdoms, good for? For man, in reference to the manifold use which his understanding teaches him to make of all these creatures" (p. 276; V: 506).

That the human kingdom is to be placed at the top of the hierarchy of natural kingdoms is a familiar doctrine, as is the argument Kant provides to support the claim that the human agent is the master of nature: "he is the only being upon [earth] who can form a concept of purposes and who can, by his reason, make out of an aggregate of purposively formed things a system of pur-

poses" (*ibid.*). Kant, however, gives an interesting twist to this doctrine by pointing out that, following Linnaeus, we can also turn around the above order of questioning. Thus we may see the herbivorous animals as having the purpose of preventing the exuberant growth of some plants from leading to the extinction of other plants. The carnivora serve as a means of controlling the voracity of the herbivora, and, Kant adds, "[f]inally man by his pursuit of these and his diminution of their numbers, preserves a certain equilibrium between the producing and the destructive powers of nature." This implies that "man, although in a certain reference he might be esteemed a purpose, yet in another has only the rank of a means" (p. 277; 506). That humanity has too often failed in the latter function hardly needs to be argued: mastery of nature is not a given but a task.

The question is still open what the over-all purpose of his connection with nature is for the human individual himself. (This purpose is, of course, the ultimate purpose of nature, because the human kingdom is the highest of all natural kingdoms). Kant turns to this question in paragraph 83: "[T]his purpose must either be of a kind that can be satisfied by nature in its beneficence, or it is the aptitude and skill for all kinds of purposes for which nature (external and internal) can be used by him. The first purpose of nature would be man's *happiness*, the second his *culture* (p. 279; 509). Kant offers two arguments to show that happiness is not the ultimate purpose of nature. The first is that our idea of happiness changes so frequently that nature, whether it is our natural order or some hypothetical one, as a system of universal and fixed laws can never by itself harmonize with this idea. Although we may doubt that our idea of happiness is indeed so "vacillating" as Kant claims it to be, it is to be granted that nature as such cannot guarantee human happiness, because it lacks the freedom, creativity, and spontaneity embedded in our notion of happiness. Mere natural mechanisms can provide pleasure, but not happiness, because the latter presupposes self-activity. The second argument is that our natural order offers us in fact little in terms of happiness. As Kant puts it, "[n]ature has not taken [the human individual] for her special darling and favored him with benefit above all animals" (p. 280; 510). Like all other animals, we are subject to the destructive operations of nature, such as diseases, hunger, harsh climates, natural disasters, and assaults by living organisms. It is therefore implausible to hold that the over-all purpose of our connection with nature is limited to the happiness that nature in itself can supply "in its beneficence." The same can be said of internal

nature. Our natural dispositions are disharmonious; left to themselves, i.e., in the absence of rational and moral control, they lead to "self-devised torments," "oppression," and the "barbarism of war" (*ibid.*).

It follows that culture must be the ultimate purpose of nature. This conclusion basically accords with Kant's view in "Universal History"; for we have seen that he argues there that the significance of our lack of instinctual determination in conjunction with our hostile natural environment is that we must affirm humanity as self-creation. Kant defines *culture* as the human aptitude for setting and pursuing purposes in general, but he also uses the term to refer to the products of this aptitude. The moral purpose of culture is stated at the outset: culture is "what nature can supply to prepare [the human agent] for what he must do himself in order to be a final purpose" (p. 281; 511). From this angle then: that culture has the external purpose of setting the stage for the moral society, we must understand Kant's discussion of the evolution of human culture in the remainder of paragraph 83.

In this discussion Kant draws a distinction between the culture of skill and the culture of discipline, referring to two different ways in which the aptitude to set and realize all kinds of ends has gradually evolved within human history. The culture of skill is "positive" in character, for it involves the increasing capacity of human beings to use the natural and social environment for their own purposes—skill, then, encompasses the technical and pragmatic dispositions—whereas the culture of discipline is "negative" in character, consisting of "the freeing of the will from the despotism of [natural] desires," which, left to themselves, would render human agents "incapable even of choosing" (p. 282; 512).

Kant begins his analysis of the culture of skill by noting that progress in skill has been achieved through social inequality. The great majority of human beings have always worked in a rather mechanical fashion, requiring no special skills, in order to provide "the necessities of life . . . for the convenience and leisure of others who work at the less necessary elements of culture, science and art" (*ibid.*). This division of labor signifies class conflict, for the cultured keep the masses in "an oppressed condition," in which "they have hard work and little enjoyment." With the progress of culture this situation gradually changes, as much of the culture of the upper classes (which includes, we may presume, technology and the skill of social control) is gradually extended to the lower classes. But, Kant argues, "calamities increase equally in two directions": the lower classes are increasingly subject to violence from

the upper classes ("violence from without"), for they no longer accept their oppressed condition (and, we may add, they have gradually acquired the cultural means to change it), whereas the upper classes suffer from "internal discontent" arising from luxury and decadence. Kant claims that this culture of inequality is a "splendid misery," even though it contributes to the development of human capacities. The solution to the increasingly intense class conflict is a "*civil community*" where there will be equality in freedom for all citizens, and, Kant maintains, only in this state "can the greatest development of natural capacities take place" (*ibid.*). Thus the hope for the future which Kant projects is that the growing discord within the state will call forth its opposite: the perfect state as one aspect of the highest political good.

Kant's analysis here is clearly influenced by Rousseau, but we may assume that the French Revolution made an impact as well, with the old regime representing the luxury and decadence of the upper classes.¹ Accordingly, we may interpret Kant here as "predicting" that future revolutions will occur as the result of the increasing oppression of the lower classes in the absolutist state, and will lead to more just political arrangements. His analysis here accords with that offered in "An Old Question." One essential difference, though, is to be noted: no claim is now made that the democratic aspirations of the lower classes signify that a moral motive is operative within humanity. Yet, the discussion in *Judgment* has the merit of complementing the analysis in "Universal History" of the causes of conflict and change within the state: the struggle for political domination and control is seen as arising not only from ambition and lust for power but also from economic ("material") factors such as exploitation and division of labor.

War is another impetus behind progress in skill. In agreement with "Universal History" but contrary to his view in *Peace*, Kant argues in *Judgment* that a requisite for the civil community is a "*cosmopolitan whole*, i.e., a system of all states." Kant asserts that this system would arise "if men were clever enough to find it out and wise enough to submit themselves voluntarily to its constraint. . . . [But] failing this, and with the obstacles that ambition, lust of dominion, and avarice, especially in those who have the authority in their hands, present to even the possibility of such a scheme, there is, inevitably, *war*" (pp. 282–83; 512–13; translation altered). In spite of the "dreadful afflictions" that war, and in particular the preparation for war, impose upon humanity, we should, however, not despair and view human history as aimless and not subject to improvement. To be sure, from the perspective

of the human species, war is an undesigned enterprise, stirred up by "unbridled passions," but, Kant argues, from the perspective of "supreme wisdom" —that is, from the angle of a praxis- and future-oriented philosophy of history—we may perhaps see war as "designed" in that it prepares human beings for "conformity to law amid the freedom of states" and motivates them to develop "all talents serviceable for culture to the highest possible pitch" (p. 283; 513). We have here, then, another instance of Kant's regulative thesis that it is rational to hope that (growing) discord will lead eventually to concord—now in the form of international peace, as the other aspect of the highest political good.

Kant does not tell us here how the realization of the highest political good can facilitate or be conducive to the realization of the moral society, but we have already encountered his answer to this question: the external freedom guaranteed by peace within and between the states creates room for autonomous action and lessens the number of occasions that provoke us to immoral behavior. Another consideration is that free institutions enhance moral dialogues which are needed to determine right action and social policy. We may note, moreover, that progress in skill facilitates the realization of the moral society in that increased capacity to control the natural and social environment holds promise of diminishing the impact of two sources of human conflict, namely, economic scarcity and the inability to steer social mechanisms rationally.

Kant is more explicit about the moral significance of the culture of discipline or training. This culture involves the refinement of crude passions and inner control of instinctual drives, creating the possibility of freedom of choice and the pursuit of long-range projects. Culture is a necessary preparatory step toward the good will and must therefore be seen as an aspect of moral education, both of the individual and of the species. Following Rousseau, however, Kant also points out in *Judgment* that culture may lead to decadence, ever-increasing artificial needs, and a false pride in refined taste as such, as if such taste without morality were anything but a "splendid misery." And elsewhere Kant lists envy, ingratitude, and spitefulness as "vices of culture and civilization" (*Religion*, pp. 22 and 29; VI: 166 and 173). More generally, it may be observed that the inner discipline acquired through cultural development can be used to promote both moral and immoral ends. But, contrary to Rousseau, Kant unambiguously argues that cultural progress is nonetheless desirable because we may expect that the pitfalls of culture will be gradually overcome by moving

forward—through more culture—to political peace and the moral society. Further, although this point is not stressed here, Kant holds that culture has not only a negative disciplinary function with regard to the life of moral autonomy, but also a more directly supportive function. That is, esthetic contemplation and scientific activity (the “beautiful arts and the sciences”) create disinterested pleasure, a conception of universality, and a sense of freedom in accordance with law (positive freedom), and these experiences are conducive to and a semblance of moral praxis and feeling.² Thus it can be truly said that culture “prepare[s] men for a lordship in which [moral] reason alone shall have authority” (*Judgment*, p. 284; V: 513).

Paragraphs 84–86 address the final end of creation, and much of what they cover is either by now familiar ground (e.g., the antinomy of practical reason) or not directly relevant to our present concern (e.g., the Argument from Design). We can limit our discussion to two problems. The first is that Kant seems to waver here between saying that the good will is the final purpose of creation and claiming that the moral society, or highest good, is that purpose. There is, however, no real inconsistency here; rather, the issue is imprecise terminology. Kant defines a “*final purpose* [as a] purpose which needs no other as condition of its possibility” (p. 284; § 84; 514). What distinguishes a final purpose from an external purpose, then, is that its teleological significance is not derived from its serving as a means to other ends. This implies that, with respect to a final purpose, we can no longer legitimately raise the question, What is it good for?, because its purposive meaning is not determined by other ends. Kant asserts: “Now of man (and so of every rational creature in the world) as a moral being it can no longer be asked why (*quem in finem*) he exists.”³ The reason for this is that the worth of the good will, i.e., “man . . . as a moral being,” is determined by its intention or motive, not by the ends it might promote. Yet it is misleading to continue to state, as Kant does, that the existence of the virtuous person “involves the highest purpose.” The individual as a moral being is certainly *a* final end, but *the* final end of creation is the moral society. What Kant should have said is that the individual, as *a* final or unconditioned end, projects *the* final purpose of creation and seeks to mirror this purpose in his conduct. Kant is imprecise in the opposite way when he states in a later paragraph that “[t]he moral law . . . determines for us . . . a final purpose toward which it obliges us to strive, and this purpose is the *highest good in the world* possible through freedom” (p. 301; § 87; 531). The highest

good is not *a* final purpose but *the* final purpose of creation and human history.

The second, more weighty, problem concerns Kant's view that the moral society, as the highest purpose within the hierarchy of ends in the universe, conditions the worth of all lower ends: the purpose of the domination of nature is culture, and the purpose of culture, in turn, is to bring about the highest political good as a preparatory step toward the moral society. Thus it may seem that on Kant's account, human activities such as the pursuit of knowledge or the creation and experience of beautiful objects lack intrinsic value; they are mere means toward the realization of the good will as the only intrinsic good. Kant himself suggests this interpretation by stating, for example, in paragraph 86, that without moral agents "the whole creation would be a mere waste" and that it is only in reference to the good will "that the being of everything else in the world gets its worth" (p. 293; 523). A closer look at the text, however, makes clear that Kant adheres instead to four other theses. First, the good will is not the only intrinsic good as such; rather, it is the only intrinsic good that is morally good in all circumstances. In the famous words of the *Foundations* (p. 9; IV: 249), "[n]othing in the world—indeed nothing even beyond the world—can possibly be conceived which could be called good without qualification except a *good will*." Second, Kant's claim that certain human activities or ends have a contributory value in terms of the realization of the good will does not imply that this is their only value. Happiness, the pursuit of knowledge, culture, and so on, may be conducive to the development or continuation of the moral disposition, but they are also sought for their own sake. Were this not Kant's view he would not have maintained that such activities or ends are an intrinsic part of the good life (the individual highest good) or the good society (the social highest good or moral society).⁴ Third, it is only in virtue of autonomous legislation, or the final purpose of creation, that we can ascribe moral significance to such individual or historical processes as progress in skill and inner discipline. In this light Kant's contention is to be understood that it is only in reference to the good will "that the being of everything else in the world gets its worth." Fourth, Kant holds that any given totality or whole that comprises some intrinsic good but lacks the good will is, finally, not worth being pursued. Thus he states in paragraph 86: "What does it avail . . . that this man has so much talent, that he is so active therewith, and that he exerts thereby a useful influence over the community, . . . if he does not possess a good will? He is a contemptible

object considered in respect of his inner self" (p. 294; 524). It is also on this ground that Kant states that without moral beings "the whole creation would be a mere waste." Moreover, we have noted that he maintains for a similar reason in "Universal History" that a possible annihilation of our civilization is ultimately to be regretted only from the perspective of the moral society. But this view that the good will is a *sine qua non* for the good life or the good society is not to be equated with the claim that virtue as such suffices for either one of them. These ideal ends encompass also a variety of other intrinsic goods.

2. The Cunning of Nature and the Society of Intelligent Devils

Kant contends in *Judgment* that culture is "what nature can supply to prepare [the human agent] for what he must do himself in order to be a final purpose" and that this final purpose "is not a purpose which nature would be competent to bring about . . . , because it is unconditioned" (pp. 281 and 285; §§ 83 and 84; V: 511 and 515). This indicates that it is Kant's view that the cunning of nature suffices, in principle, for bringing about the highest political good as an aspect of culture, whereas the moral society is the exclusive domain of the good will and moral action. This is not to deny, as Patrick Riley puts it in his *Kant's Political Philosophy* (p. 80), that "Kant's culture—including legality, peace, art and science—is a mid-way (as it were) between nature and [positive] freedom." Certainly, culture as encompassing an inner and outer control of our natural impulses is a step forward to the moral society in that such control facilitates the moral task. The crux of the matter is, however, that Kant's culture, viewed as the ultimate purpose of nature, is a bridge between *mere* nature and morality. That is, this culture, as the overcoming of nature, remains within the sphere of nature—it is nature mediated by nature—although it creates in cunning fashion the step beyond nature toward morality. More specifically, what Kant suggests in *Judgment* is that, although exploitation, avarice, ambition, lust for power, war, and the like, are the dominant forces behind the evolution of human culture, we are justified in hoping that sooner or later humanity will turn the skills and discipline acquired in this process toward higher ends, because it is to be expected that the culture of discord will at some point exact so high a price from us that calculated self-interest *will*—and thanks to the acquired skills *can*—bring about political

peace so as to avoid such a disastrous result. Thus the realization of the highest political good can be accomplished within the realm of the natural will; i.e., it does not necessarily presuppose the moral will, and this is a cunning process in that the motive of self-interest, through bringing about this good, unwittingly realizes a morally demanded condition which is conducive to the overcoming of this very same motive in the form of the moral motive.

A more detailed look at the Kantian practical *corpus* corroborates my interpretation that, on Kant's account, the highest political good falls within the scope of nature alone. We have seen in the previous chapter that Kant outlines three roads toward international peace. A brief recapitulation will make clear that each of these is a road of self-interest. The first road is that, on the supposition that we may expect an increasing number of republican states to emerge in the future, we may also expect that the cause of peace will be promoted; for we may anticipate that these states will associate together, gradually enlarging the federation of states. A crucial premise of this hope is that the republican constitution requires the consent of the citizens for the declaration of war, and, Kant says, "nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war" (*Peace*, pp. 94–95; VI: 436). The second road is that we may expect that war will become at some point so devastating that it will force humanity into the condition of peace. Here again it is self-interest that motivates change, even self-interest in its most basic form—survival. The third road is that increasing trade between the nations will promote peace, because war interrupts commercial transactions and is, accordingly, incompatible with the "spirit of commerce," which is a spirit of limited self-interest. In each case, however, the qualification must be added that, strictly speaking, self-interest alone is not enough, for the realization of lasting peace presupposes also the capacity on the part of humanity to find institutional forms that guarantee peace. It is from this angle that we must interpret Kant's statement in *Judgment*, cited earlier, that a "system of states" would arise "if men were clever enough to find it out and wise enough to submit themselves voluntarily to its constraint." And, in light of the foregoing, we may assume that this wisdom is prudential, not moral. The realization of international peace, then, requires a natural history (self-interest and pragmatic knowledge), not necessarily a moral or rational history (the good will).

In *Peace* Kant makes comparable, but more explicit, remarks with respect to the perfect state, the republican state:

As harsh as it may sound, the problem of organizing a state can be solved even for a race of devils, if only they are intelligent. The problem is: "Given a multitude of rational beings requiring universal laws for their preservation, but each of whom is secretly inclined to exempt himself from them, to establish a constitution in such a way that, although their private intentions conflict, they check each other, with the result that their public conduct is the same as if they had no such evil intentions" (p. 112; VI: 452–53; translation altered).

Thus the realization of the perfect state presupposes two things that are within the reach of the history of humanity as a natural history: the motive of self-interest ("preservation") and political technology, i.e., pragmatic knowledge. Kant emphasizes this claim that the good will is not a *sine qua non* for the realization of the ideal state by arguing that this end "does not require that we know how to attain the moral improvement of men but only that we should know the mechanism of nature in order to use it on men," adding the parenthetical remark that "[a] good constitution is not be expected from morality, but, conversely, a good moral condition of a people is to be expected only under a good constitution" (pp. 112–13; 453). This permits Kant to conclude here that "[n]ature inexorably wills that the right should finally triumph. What we neglect to do comes about by itself, though with great inconveniences to us" (p. 113; 453).

It is to be emphasized that Kant's contention that nature alone can bring about the highest political good is not a dogmatic assertion about what will actually happen in the future. A claim to this effect would conflict with the primacy of praxis in his work, since it would invite us to watch the inevitable progressive course of history from the ivory tower of contemplation. After outlining the third road to peace between the nations, Kant states:

In this manner nature guarantees perpetual peace by the mechanism of human passions. Certainly she does not do so with sufficient certainty for us to predict the future in any theoretical sense, but adequately from a practical point of view, making it our duty to work toward this end, which is not just a chimerical one (*Peace*, p. 114; VI: 454–55).

Similar remarks apply to the perfect state. So Kant is not claiming that the highest political good will be realized as a historical project in the absence of the good will. Rather, his claim is that morally committed persons in their efforts to change society may take as their guideline that the cunning of nature suffices to bring about the highest political good, and their actions then will hasten the

realization of this good. Accordingly, when confronted with the selfish actions of humanity, these individuals do not despair, because they consider themselves justified in hoping that the negative effects of these actions will force humanity to seek social arrangements in which these selfish actions are controlled for the benefit of all. Thus the regulative idea of the cunning of nature stimulates moral action. Further, in accordance with the primacy of praxis, it is to be noted that the more effective this regulative idea is, the more superfluous it becomes; for the greater the number of human agents who accept this idea and on this ground do not grow discouraged from engaging in social action, the smaller the number of human agents upon whom nature has to play its cunning tricks.

Yet, is it plausible to hold that the cunning of nature, in principle, suffices to bring about the highest political good? Kant's thesis that a race of intelligent devils would seek the perfect state implies an affirmative answer to this question. For, although nature cannot make us moral, it can make us intelligent in a pragmatic sense: we may expect that the lessons of history will eventually force selfish agents to recognize, or discover, that the perfect state is to their mutual benefit (assuming, for the moment, that Kant is correct about this latter point). Moreover, we can see each state as an intelligent devil and infer that, just as intelligent devils would seek a coercive peace within the state, the individual states would accept a federation of states understood as a balance of powers.⁵ So the upshot is that we should subject to philosophical scrutiny the idea that self-interested intelligent beings opt for a state that guarantees equality in freedom for all its citizens.

Before starting this enterprise, a few words need to be said about the issue at stake. What makes Kant's claim concerning the choice of intelligent devils attractive is that it seems a minimal assumption for supporting the hope for progress. If his claim is correct, we undoubtedly have good reason for looking to the future with morally adequate confidence. However, we have to pay a serious price, which Kant overlooked: assuming that intelligent devils can bring about the perfect state, we can no longer defend the view that political progress within history signifies moral progress. That is to say, we are no longer justified in holding that events such as the French Revolution, in conjunction with the enthusiasm it engendered among its spectators, indicate that humanity is already moving toward a stage in which it self-consciously shapes its own destiny on the basis of moral ideals. For, taking Kant's claim concerning the intelligent devils seriously, we

must conclude that the spectators through their "wishful participation" in the Revolution sided with intelligent devils. We must, moreover, conclude that the spectators are such devils when they, in their turn, engage in revolutionary action. Or, at least, on the basis of Kant's claim we cannot refute these conclusions. His thesis of moral progress, then, collapses in the face of his thesis concerning the race of devils. The attractive minimal assumption for progress weakens the hope for a rational history of humanity. Kant cannot have it both ways. I think we can leave open the question of which is the better way of supporting the hope for progress; for I will now argue that Kant's view is implausible that intelligent devils can bring about a perfect state, basing myself on Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*.⁶

I assume that the main ideas of Rawls's work are known. My concern here is with his first principle of justice, which says that "[e]ach person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all" (p. 302). Rawls contends that a good constitution must adopt this liberty principle, and this accords with Kant's view. Kant defines the perfect state as having "[a] constitution allowing *the greatest possible human freedom* in accordance with laws by which *the freedom of each is made to be consistent with that of all others*. (*Pure Reason*, p. 312; III: 258). Rawls goes on to maintain that the constitution of the good state must secure the following basic liberties: "political liberty (the right to vote and to be eligible for public office) together with freedom of speech and assembly; liberty of conscience and freedom of thought; freedom of the person along with the right to hold (personal) property; and freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure as defined by the concept of the rule of law" (p. 61). Again, this fits Kant's view, not in detail but in general orientation.⁷ Finally, both Kant and Rawls hold that their liberty principle is compatible with the existence of significant social and economic inequalities.⁸

A central thesis of Rawls's work is that the people in the original position behind the veil of ignorance will opt for the liberty principle. Now if it can be shown that (a) Kant's intelligent devils are the same type of persons as the Rawlsian people in the original position and that (b) Rawls is correct in holding that several constraints, such as the veil of ignorance, are to be placed upon his people if they are to opt for the liberty principle, then it follows that Kant is mistaken in claiming that his devils will choose the perfect state. For, as we have already seen, the perfect state instantiates the liberty principle, and the Kantian devils are not sub-

ject to such constraints as Rawls imposes upon his people. So our discussion should focus on (a) and (b).

Rawls assumes that the people in the original position seek to maximize their own interests. This assumption is made for "strategic" reasons; i.e., it is a minimal assumption. And Rawls, accordingly, rightly claims that there is no inconsistency in supposing that, once the parties have left the original position (the veil of ignorance has been lifted), they "find that they have ties of sentiment and affection, and want to advance the interest of others and to see their ends attained" (p. 129). Furthermore, self-interest must not be confused with egoism. Rawls makes the additional assumption that "each person in the original position [will] care about the well-being of some of those in the next generation" (p. 128). This care is conceived of in terms of family ties, but the qualification is added that this interpretation is not essential to the main argument for the principle(s) of social justice. The assumption warrants the claim that each person in the original position will opt for a conception of justice that is not only in his own interest but also in the interest of some members of the next generation. Indeed in this regard it does not seem to be essential whether these persons are family members or not. The over-all result is that the assumption prevents the choice of a society in which the present generation, in pursuit of its own happiness, severely curtails the material and existential possibilities of future generations.

Thus far the Rawlsian people in the original position resemble the Kantian devils. Both types of person are selfish, not in that they are purely egoistic but in that they fail to take an interest in the well-being of humanity. The truth of the matter seems to be that both Kant and Rawls take the individual as he is molded by our society; the "self" of self-interest is the phenomenal self, not the noumenal self. More precisely, they both take as their point of departure the phenomenal self, but abstract from the fact that human agents at times attempt to live up to their ideal self. Rawls's motive for this strategy is to make a strong case for his conception of social justice, starting his deliberations with a minimal assumption, whereas Kant's motive is to affirm the hope for social progress. An additional similarity is that Rawls also supposes that the people in the original position are intelligent (like the Kantian devils): they have learned the lessons of history, as is manifest in Rawls's claim that they are familiar with the "general facts about human society," "political affairs," the "principles of economic theory," the "basis of social organization," and the "laws of human psychology" (p. 137).

Granted that the Kantian and Rawlsian individuals are the same type of person, it becomes interesting to look at some other assumptions that Rawls makes in establishing that his people will opt for the liberty principle. I will first briefly turn to the "mutual disinterest" assumption and then deal more extensively with the veil of ignorance, pointing out in each case the ramifications for Kant's contention that devils, if intelligent, will opt for the perfect state.

Rawls assumes that the parties in the original position are mutually disinterested, not only in the sense that they do not seek to promote one another's ends but also in the sense that they do not attempt "to impose injuries on one another." Rawls continues: "they are not moved by affection or rancor. Nor do they try to gain relative to each other; they are not envious or vain" (p. 144). The same cannot be said of the Kantian devils, because we may suppose that they display unsocial sociability and, hence, are engaged in a competitive struggle, trying to outdo one another.

This difference between Kant and Rawls supports my contention that the Kantian devils will not, or are not able to, organize a society that secures equal liberty for all. For, although unsocial sociability may force human beings into society, it is at the same time an impediment to the realization of a just society. After all, lust for power can be satisfied only in a society of economic, social, and political inequality, and a competitive spirit seeks the same type of society. Now it might be argued that these unsocial propensities are pragmatically irrational, not fitting for intelligent beings. An argument to this effect, however, is unlikely to succeed; for the attempt to outdo others violates not the canons of pragmatic reason, but those of moral reason. Also it must not be forgotten that the Kantian devils are indeed devils who will use any opportunity and means to promote their interests. In short, Rawls seems right in holding that the assumption of mutual disinterest in its non-envy and noncompetitiveness aspects is required if the liberty principle is to be chosen.

A much stronger case against Kant, however, can be built on the rationale for the veil-of-ignorance procedure. Rawls believes that this veil must be lowered so that his people will opt for equal liberty for all. The effect of this procedure is that the people in the original position momentarily do not know their places in society, their class position or social status, their fortunes in the natural lottery of assets and abilities, their special psychological features (such as their aversion to risk), their intelligence, strength, and other natural characteristics. Rawls adds that the veil of ignorance

also brings it about that the people in the original position do not know their specific conception of the good, the particulars of their plans of life, the generation to which they belong, and the particular circumstances of their society (see p. 137).

Perhaps the veil of ignorance is an internally inconsistent procedural device. It asks us to forget about particulars, while we must retain generalized knowledge, as if such knowledge about society and human beings were not historically dated and variant with class position. (Apparently, Rawls thinks that ideological distortion of social knowledge does not pose a problem.⁹) Be this as it may, what is crucial to notice is that the over-all effect of the veil of ignorance is to guarantee impartiality. For, once this procedure has been followed, one does not know whether one is person *A* or *B*, etc., and hence, any motive is taken away for choosing a principle of justice that suits the particular interests of *A* or *B*, etc. Or, presumably more in accordance with Rawls's view, the effect of the veil of ignorance is that in some sense we still know who we are, but do not know how we are going to fare,¹⁰ for we lack specific knowledge about ourselves and the society we shall enter. In both cases, however, the result is that we are forced by the veil of ignorance to consider the interests of others, because we may turn out to be these others, as it were. That is to say, their interests may well turn out to be our own interests, and, hence, in considering our own interests and the maximization thereof, we are considering the interests of others.

"Forced" impartiality is a crucial premise of Rawls's argument for the liberty principle. He argues in some detail for equal liberty of conscience, maintaining that "[t]he reasoning in this case can be generalized to apply to other freedoms, although not always with the same force" (p. 206). I will not sketch all the aspects of Rawls's reasoning for equality in freedom of conscience, since a rough outline suffices for my purposes. I will add, however, some additional considerations.

Freedom of conscience is important for the fulfillment of certain religious and moral obligations, and the parties in the original position are aware that such obligations play a significant role in their lives. (These obligations are here best understood as personal obligations; they are, of course, not obligations laid down by the principles of social justice.) More generally, freedom of conscience is important in that it safeguards the possibility of exploring and examining one's own personal convictions.

Rawls presents the people in the original position with three principles of justice that regulate the distribution of the liberty of

conscience, namely, majority rule, the utility principle, and the liberty principle. Limiting the discussion to religious obligations, we can make the following observations. Provided that one belongs to the majority religion of a certain society, majority rule is a better option than the liberty principle, which requires equality in freedom of conscience. Consider, for example, education. Religious education is an important parental obligation, and it is, therefore, in the interest of the majority of parents to have a school system that makes the majority religion part of its curriculum. This would violate the liberty principle, assuming that our concern is with the public school system. Other examples to the same effect can easily be given, and so we may conclude that majority rule is the preferred option, at least for the majority. The veil of ignorance, however, excludes the knowledge that one will enter a society with a majority religion. More importantly, this veil prevents one from knowing whether one belongs to the majority. Hence, one is forced to look at the situation from the perspective of being a member of the minority. The outcome is that the liberty principle becomes the preferred option. For, as Rawls states with respect to the various treasured aspects of the liberty of conscience, "[e]ven granting (what may be questioned) that it is more probable than not that one will turn out to belong to [some] majority . . . , to gamble in this way [i.e., to choose for majority rule] would show that one did not take one's religious or moral convictions seriously, or highly value the liberty to examine one's beliefs" (p. 207). I may add, since Rawls fails to do so here, that the veil of ignorance also forces one to become a conservative risk taker: daring gamblers seem to be a minority, and, since the veil blocks out one's knowledge concerning one's own aversion to risk, it is rational to consider oneself to be a conservative gambler. Certainly, conservative gamblers who treasure liberty of conscience will not opt for majority rule.

The analysis of the utility principle can proceed along similar lines. Consider again the above example concerning religious education. It might well be the case that the satisfaction the majority derives from having their religion taught in the public school system outweighs the dissatisfaction of the minority. If so, the utility principle is in the interest of the majority, but conflicts with the interest of the minority. Now, in the original position behind the veil of ignorance, one must take into account the uncertainties embedded in the utilitarian calculus (*ibid.*, pp. 160–61). Perhaps the utility principle leads to the same results as the liberty principle, but it might also be the case that the utility principle favors the

majority. In the absence of the veil of ignorance, this would make the utility principle the better of the two options (for the majority), but, once the veil has been lowered, the liberty principle becomes the preferable option, because one does not wish to gamble with one's moral and religious obligations.

The mutual-disinterest assumption (as including non-envy and noncompetitiveness) and the veil-of-ignorance procedure place *moral* constraints upon the self-interested agents in the original position. The Kantian devils lack these constraints, and the consequence is that they will not opt for the perfect state. The unsocial nature of the Kantian devils points to this conclusion; the rationale for the veil-of-ignorance procedure strongly affirms it. For, as we have seen in the above example of liberty of conscience, this procedure is crucial for making the liberty principle the preferred choice. It is only when a dominant religion is absent in their society that it is rational for Kantian devils to choose equality in freedom of conscience, although even in this case it might be better to form a coalition of minority groups, constituting together a majority and repressing the resulting minority. Moreover, societies with a dominant religion are common, and the same can be said of moral doctrines, styles of living, personal convictions, and the like. So the prevailing choice of the Kantian devils will be not the liberty principle as regulating freedom of conscience but rather the majority principle (or perhaps the utility principle). Similar observations can be made with respect to other basic liberties. We might, for example, expect that the Kantian devils will opt for limiting political liberties to an ethnic majority and that they will wish to curtail the freedom of speech and assembly of the minority, preventing their challenge to the rule of the majority.¹¹

Until now I have deliberately neglected the fact that the minority is not prepared to accept majority rule (or, alternatively, the utility principle). Rawls requires that any principle of justice that is chosen in the original position is to be adopted in a unanimous manner. On these terms, the Kantian devils will not be able to come to a principle of justice governing the distribution of basic liberties within society. There are two possible solutions: the Kantian devils can stop being devils, take into account moral principles which lead them to recognize the interests of all (as Rawls is doing in an indirect fashion for the people in the original position), and in this way come to a unanimous acceptance of a certain conception of social justice, or these devils can supplement their deliberations with force. From the angle of maximizing individual

interests, the use of force is rational, if successful. Faced with the force employed by the majority, the minority devils may come to the conclusion that acceptance of majority rule is after all in their best interest. So either solution shows that Kant's contention is mistaken that intelligent devils can organize a perfect state.

Nonetheless, Kant's view has a rational core. It would be naive to deny that self-interest (the cunning of nature) plays an important role in progressive political change. It might be in the interest of the rulers gradually to extend basic liberties to their subjects, because the power of force is not unlimited and might be too high a price to pay. Or, alternatively, as Kant suggests, the rulers may take such measures for the sake of increasing economic activity, strengthening the position of their state vis-à-vis other nations. Likewise, we may suppose that those who struggle for the extension or effective implementation of basic liberties are at times guided by prudential rather than moral concerns. What the above observations and arguments concerning social justice, however, do show is that the cunning of nature is ultimately an insurmountable impediment to the realization of the perfect state. In order that the fateful circle of the oppressed who become oppressors be broken, morality in its *directive* function (i.e., the recognition of universal rights) is required. The same pattern holds for international relations. Moreover, it seems that morality in its *corrective* function is needed to bring about the highest political good. Intelligent devils will fail to place moral constraints upon social action, and this darkens the prospect of a universal legal order. In Part Two I will argue, further, that, even if we assume that both self-interest and morality call for the realization of some ideal institution (such as the perfect state), morality still has an indispensable *motivational* role to play in bringing about such an institution. This argument, if correct, underscores the claim that intelligent devils will not engage in social action toward ideal institutions. Morally committed persons, then, cannot base their hope for progress on the cunning of nature alone. What needs to be shown is that we are justified in hoping that humanity is making moral progress as well. Kant says that the French Revolution is a historical sign that supports this latter hope. Thus, on my account, such signs must—and consistently can—play a greater role in an adequate Kantian philosophy of history than Kant ascribed to them.

Finally, these considerations point to the conclusion that legal progress and moral progress are best understood as feedback processes with regard to each other—that is, legal progress facilitates moral progress, which, in turn, stimulates further legal progress.

Although this insight is not altogether lacking in Kant's work, it is certainly understressed. Kant tends to sketch the history of humanity as a *mere* natural history in which the evolution of moral reason disappears in the background. This, in conjunction with his thesis concerning intelligent devils, leads Kant to make the unmediated claim that "[a] good constitution is not to be expected from morality, but conversely, a good moral condition of a people is to be expected only under a good constitution."

3. The Highest Political Good and the Highest Moral Good: Systematic Analysis and Critique

Kant's contention that devils can organize a perfect state and, we may assume, international peace, highlights the question of how he sees the relation between the highest political good and the moral society. Yirmiahu Yovel draws from Kant's claim the conclusion that "*even to the best of states cannot be attributed a moral value per se, and it is not in any political organization that the end of history is to be placed.*"¹² I think that Yovel somewhat overstates his case here, but I also will argue that Kant's view in this regard is far from satisfactory. I will begin by briefly expounding Kant's discussion in *Religion* of the relation between the ethical commonwealth and the political commonwealth.

This discussion clarifies Kant's view of the relation between the perfect state and the highest moral good, although the caveat is to be added that the political commonwealth is not to be equated with the perfect state; rather, Kant uses this term to refer to any political state. Moreover, it is to be noted at the outset that he uses the term 'ethical commonwealth' to refer both to the moral society and to any moral organization that harmonizes with this ideal. Kant puts the matter more precisely when he says that such an organization is only a "representation" or "schema" of the ethical commonwealth (*Religion*, p. 88; VI: 240).

There are some important similarities between the ethical commonwealth and the political commonwealth. Both are entered from a state of nature—that is, a hypothetical state in which there is no rule of law—and their citizens are united under (public) laws. But there also are important differences: the juridical state of nature is a condition in which there is no legal authority, whereas the ethical state of nature is a situation in which there is no shared set of moral rules that guide and inspire the behavior of human

beings; moreover, the laws of the political commonwealth are coercive laws imposed by the legal authority, whereas the laws of the ethical commonwealth are noncoercive, i.e., they are self-imposed, or autonomous laws.

The juridical state of nature is by definition an ethical state of nature, because it is a moral duty to obey and seek the rule of law. Kant maintains that there is an empirical relation between the two: the juridical commonwealth is a precondition for the emergence of the ethical commonwealth, because one can expect autonomy to arise only in a situation in which external freedom is guaranteed by the law. This development toward autonomy is to be hoped for, but it cannot be enforced. Kant states:

In an already existing political commonwealth all the political citizens, as such, are in an *ethical state of nature* and are entitled to remain therein; for it would be a contradiction (*in adjecto*) for the political commonwealth to compel its citizens to enter into an ethical commonwealth, since the very concept of the latter involves freedom from coercion (*ibid.*, p. 87; 240).

Kant adds that every political commonwealth may indeed wish that its citizens be united under moral laws, i.e., have joined an ethical commonwealth, "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, again, it would violate the dictates of moral reason to force the citizens in this direction. Besides, it would conflict with political prudence in that it would threaten the stability of the state. Thus Kant comes to say: "woe to the legislator who wishes to establish through force a polity directed to ethical ends!" More specifically, Kant seems to argue here for two things: the legislator may not force us to actively promote the private ends of others, and he may not force us to join any religious organization (as an instance of a moral organization, anticipating the ethical commonwealth).

The primary need for leaving the ethical state of nature and joining an ethical commonwealth arises from the social nature of moral evil. In Kant's own words, "[e]nvy, the lust for power, greed, and the malignant inclinations bound up with these, besiege [the individual's] nature . . . as soon as he is among men." Accordingly, [i]f no means could be discovered . . . for the forming of a society which seeks to preserve morality and to work with united forces against evil, then, no matter how much the individual may have

done to free himself from evil, he will be constantly in danger of falling back under its dominion" (*ibid.*, pp. 85–86; 238; translation altered). Cooperation from others, then, which goes beyond the legal guarantee of external freedom is required so as to overcome vice, for this enforcement of external freedom, although it lessens the number of immoral actions, still leaves room for immoral behavior, calling forward a similar response from oneself. The virtuous person will, therefore, seek to join with others in 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." Or, as Kant also puts it, "[i]n addition to prescribing laws to each individual, morally legislative reason also unfurls a banner of virtue as a rallying point for all who love the good, that they may gather beneath it and thus at the very start gain the upper hand over the evil which is attacking them without rest" (p. 86; 238).

The only example of a moral society or organization which Kant provides is the church. The existing church, however, falls far short of this ideal of an ethical commonwealth, which Kant also calls the "true church." The true church is characterized by universality, purity, freedom, and unchangeableness. It is universal and unchangeable because it is a single (i.e., without sectarian divisions) church unified under moral laws that are seen as divine and holy. The true church is, moreover, pure because it is guided by no other motives than moral ones—that is, it is "purified of the stupidity of superstition and the madness of fanaticism." Last, since the true church is entered voluntarily, it is free, both internally and in relation to the political commonwealth (see p. 93; 246–47). The difference between the existing church and the true church corresponds to the difference between (ecclesiastical) faith and pure (rational, moral) religion. Kant writes:

There is only *one* (true) *religion*; but there can be *faiths* of several kinds. We can say further that even in the various churches, severed from one another by reason of the diversity of their modes of belief, one and the same true religion can yet be found (p. 98; 253).

Thus we may also see the true church as the rational (moral) core of existing religious institutions. The implication is that these institutions must gradually cast off their historically rooted non-rational shell (which has been in the past a source of religious conflict),¹³ leaving behind one final true church embracing all of humanity—the moral society. It is presumably from this angle that

Kant argues that even a large number of human agents united in a virtuous order "can be called not the ethical commonwealth itself but only a particular society which strives towards harmony with all men . . . ; for each of these societies in turn, in its relation to others of the same kind, can be represented as in the ethical state of nature and subject to all the defects thereof" (p. 88; 240–41).

Kant stresses that an ethical commonwealth, although bounded by civil laws, is a politically independent organization. Those who form an ethical commonwealth and shape its constitution must be free from any political interference as long as "this constitution . . . contain[s] nothing which contradicts the duty of its members as *citizens of the state*." Kant adds: "[W]hen the ethical pledge is of the genuine sort the political limitation need cause no anxiety" (p. 88; 240). His reason for this claim is that the constitution of a true ethical commonwealth is based on the duties of virtue. These ethical duties are duties of inner legislation, i.e., self-imposed duties, as opposed to duties of justice, which can be imposed upon us by an appropriate legal authority (external legislation). Now it is a duty of virtue to fulfill one's juridical duties in the absence of outer coercion—Kant therefore calls these duties "indirectly ethical" (see *Virtue*, p. 19; VII: 21)—and so we may expect, Kant argues, that those who have committed themselves to an ethical commonwealth will obey the laws of the political commonwealth. It seems that the qualification should be added that these laws should not be blatantly unjust, but, as we will see in the next chapter, Kant is hardly prepared to accept this qualification.

A final issue which deserves further elaboration is that Kant holds that the rationalization or ethicization of religious institutions implies, in effect, their being overcome as religious institutions. The visible church must eventually become invisible:

[I]n the end religion will gradually be freed from all empirical determining grounds and from all statutes 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. . . . The leading-string of holy tradition with its appendages of statutes and observances . . . becomes bit by bit dispensable, yea, finally, when man enters upon his adolescence, it becomes a fetter. . . . The humiliating distinction between *laity* and *clergy* disappears, and equality arises from true freedom, yet without anarchy, because, though each obeys the (non-statutory) 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 (*Religion*, p. 112; VI: 267–68).

This future “state” is the moral society, and, as this passage makes clear, this society is an “inner” unification of good wills through the moral law. It is, moreover, a state of universal autonomy; for Kant’s statement that we must regard the moral law as representing the will of God must not be interpreted as saying that this law is “valid” because it represents the will of God. We must first know our duty before we can describe it as “divine” or “holy.” The nonrational shell of (ecclesiastical) faith is heteronomous, whereas its rational core—i.e., the religion of reason—is autonomous, a point which Kant underscores by stating that his moral religion “obviates the erroneous representation of religion as an aggregate of *special* duties having reference directly to God; thus it prevents our taking on . . . *courtly obligations* over and above the ethico-civil duties of humanity (of man to man)” (*ibid.*, p. 142n; 302n). Further, the above passage shows that Kant views as provisional the need to join *an* ethical commonwealth so as to combat evil collectively: this is a step that is necessitated only by moral “immaturity.” Once humanity has reached “adolescence” —and we may assume that the Enlightenment corresponds to this stage of moral evolution—such collective efforts to overcome evil become dispensable and even a fetter upon moral progress. In further explicating his view along these lines, Kant presents us, I think, with both a gain and a loss. Considering the role of religious institutions in his own time, there is a gain: Kant was right in holding that the emancipation of humanity was bound up with emancipation from (ecclesiastical) faith. What is a loss, however, is that Kant in this way turns another correct insight into its opposite: social change requires collective and cooperative efforts, not actions undertaken by atomic (i.e., isolated or unorganized) moral individuals.¹⁴ The failure to recognize the possibility of ethical organizations other than the church points to the historical limits of Kant’s practical philosophy.

The different strands of Kant’s view concerning the relation between the highest political good and the highest moral good, as we have encountered them up to this point, can now be pulled together. I will list my conclusions in several points and end this section with some brief critical comments on Kant’s view.

(a) The perfect state is a state with a constitution that guarantees equal external liberty for all its citizens, and all its laws accord with this ideal. Or, to put it otherwise, the laws of the perfect state seek to enforce what Kant in *Justice* calls the “universal principle of

justice" —that is, "act externally in such a way that the free use of your will is compatible with the freedom of everyone according to a universal law."¹⁵ This enforcement of juridical duties makes it possible for each citizen of the perfect state to pursue his personal ends in freedom. These ends may be obligatory ends, morally permissible ends, or ends that are immoral but not illegal.

(b) The cunning of nature suffices, in principle, to bring about the perfect state. This state as a cultural end is a purpose of nature, and, as Kant says so strikingly, intelligent devils can organize a perfect state. His basic reason for this claim is that intelligent self-interested agents will seek to avoid the negative effects of lawless freedom or unrestrained competition, creating a legally enforced equality in freedom so that each agent can pursue his personal ends. What makes coercion necessary, Kant notes, is that there are occasions in which it is in the interest of individual devils to violate law. Coercion is, moreover, from their perspective rational in that each devil wishes to avoid the curtailment of his freedom through violation of the law by others. A more fundamental consideration is that intelligent devils realize that coercion is a rational response to the fact that the dictates of self-interest push each of them to pursue a policy that would undermine the perfect state if it were followed by all, namely, to exempt oneself from the law if it is in one's interest to do so.

(c) Nonetheless, it is misleading to claim, as Yovel does, that for Kant the perfect state lacks moral value per se. To be sure, Kant holds that a good organization of the state forces the human agent "to be a good citizen even if not a morally good person" (*Peace*, p. 112; VI: 452), but a good legal system facilitates the development of the moral disposition and prevents, moreover, a wide variety of wrong actions. More emphatically, the ethical commonwealth can arise only within the legal state. Fear of the unlawful behavior of others is an obstacle to the fulfillment of one's duties of virtue, and the realization of civil liberties creates a climate in which practical reason can flourish—for example, moral dialogue presupposes freedom of thought.

(d) This emphasis on the moral-preparatory function of the state sets Kant's political philosophy apart from the dominant orientation within the liberal tradition. This is not to deny that Kant also maintains that the ideal state must uphold such classical liberal ends as the protection of private property and the individual pursuit of happiness. Yet, even these ends must be placed within a moral context: the final yardstick is whether these ends contribute

to, or can become an aspect of, the life of moral autonomy and the moral society.

(e) We may assume that it is particularly in view of this ethical significance of the ideal state that morally committed persons see it as their duty to pursue this state. This duty can be fulfilled in various ways, such as through direct political action, educational reform, and progressive intellectual labor. The perfect state sets, in other words, an end that is a wide duty.¹⁶ This duty is one aspect of the duty to promote the highest good. Furthermore, virtuous persons obey the laws of the perfect state because these laws are just, not because they may be enforced by a coercive (external) power. (Juridical duties are indirectly ethical.)

(f) This implies that in the moral society the perfect state will have lost its repressive character. Presumably, Kant's contention (discussed in Chapter I, section 1, above) that the more existing states approach the perfect state the rarer punishment will become must be interpreted from this angle, although not exclusively. Better laws give rise to fewer violations of the laws, irrespective of the citizens' motives for obeying these laws, but it seems that the perfect state will lead to the disappearance of all punishment only if it is based on a purely moral foundation, i.e., when it is part of the moral society. (We cannot exclude the possibility of unintentional rule violations in the moral society, but the appropriate legal response in such cases would be education and information rather than punishment proper.¹⁷)

(g) A similar distinction between the political institutions of intelligent devils and those of virtuous agents can also be drawn with respect to peace between the nations, although less clearly and convincingly, because, on Kant's account, international law has no coercive agency, and, hence, obedience to this law must be voluntary. Yet the logic of his argument points to two kinds of peace: the first is based on "state-interests," such as commercial interests, and may be thought of as a balance of powers; the second rests on a purely moral foundation and involves the recognition by each state of the rights of others irrespective of prudential considerations. The first kind of peace is a prudential peace; it is a peace of intelligent devils who have come to the conclusion that war is too high a price to pay. The second kind of peace is a moral peace and presupposes the realization of the community of co-legislators. Further, it is to be noted that Kant sees the federation of states as a compromise: he argues that although a world government is a more secure basis for lasting peace, a league of nations is

nonetheless to be preferred in our present world of power politics because it does not carry with it the danger of universal despotism.¹⁸ In the moral society there is no reason for this worry, and so we may expect that within this society national boundaries will gradually lose their significance or be abandoned altogether.

(h) The federation of states is conducive to the emergence of the moral society and sets an end that is a wide duty. This duty is another aspect of the duty to promote the highest good.

(i) The above observations point to the conclusion that the highest political good—minimally understood as a moral union of nonrepressive states—is a partial instantiation of the highest moral good. This conclusion also follows from Kant's notion of the realm of ends. Recall that this realm has two aspects: its members respect the conditions of autonomy, such as freedom for all, and actively seek to promote one another's ends. The highest political good comprises universal external freedom and thus is an institutional realization of the first aspect of the realm of ends.

(j) Kant, however, does not draw this conclusion in an explicit manner. Rather, the conclusion follows because I have extrapolated from the logic of his argument some distinctions between the political institutions of intelligent devils and those of virtuous agents. Emphasizing that the cunning of nature suffices to bring about the republican state and lasting peace, Kant is pulled in a different direction, namely, toward the view that morality cannot really become visible in ideal political institutions. Thus he comes to speak of two commonwealths, the political and the moral. The virtuous person is a member of both commonwealths, but only his joining of the ethical commonwealth signifies his virtue.

(k) The act of joining the ethical commonwealth may involve becoming a member of a religious organization. Considering the fact that Kant is highly critical of the dominant religious institutions of his day and argues that they are to be changed into a church invisible, the act of joining the ethical commonwealth is, however, best interpreted as a metaphor, expressing the inner resolve to commit oneself to the virtuous life, i.e., the adoption of the maxim of holiness as one's supreme maxim. The moral society, then, emerges when all human agents have made this resolve and abide by it.

(l) In conclusion, in the moral society humanity will be united through a federation of perfect states, but for Kant this unification does not express the essence of the moral society. Rather, it is a pragmatic framework needed to make this society possible. In essence, the moral society is an "inner" unification of humanity; all

human beings will be unified in this society through the moral disposition. They will all obey the moral law with a virtuous motive and promote one another's ends.

My analysis in (d)-(i), above, shows that, even within the circle of Kant's own thought, we can infer that the highest political good is to be seen not as a mere pragmatic framework for the realization of the highest moral good but rather as a partial instantiation of this good. The basic argument is that, since juridical duties are indirectly ethical, we can envision a moral union of nonrepressive states, or even a noncoercive world society, as an institutional expression of the moral society. However, this kind of link between the highest political good and the highest moral good and, more broadly, between the moral society and ideal institutions in general, can and should be strengthened on several grounds. I will develop my criticisms of Kant's view here in three progressive steps.

The first step I have already discussed in some detail. Kant's contention that intelligent devils can organize a perfect state is implausible, and the same holds with respect to the federation of states. My discussion of Rawls has shown that morality is needed for the realization of the perfect state, and we may apply this conclusion to international peace, for we may treat states that lack a moral foundation as devilish persons. Again, this is not to deny that the dictates of self-interest also play a role in bringing about political progress. Nor is it to deny that the threat of punishment contributes to general law-abidingness.¹⁹ Rather, the point is that the republican state and perpetual peace cannot be based on such nonmoral motives alone. Thus we can conclude that political progress and moral progress are interrelated processes, and this further strengthens the notion of the ideal political order *as* a moral order.

The second step concerns the fact that Kant insufficiently recognized that the realization of the highest political good also requires fundamental economic change. Kant's peace proposal suffers from this defect. We have seen that his response to colonialism (imperialism) is basically a political one: the autonomy of all nations must be upheld, as stipulated by the limits to the right of world citizenship. Certainly, this article for perpetual peace falls short of what is needed for our own time; for it is unlikely that international peace will ever be established, or be stable, as long as the wealth of some nations is accumulated at the cost of most others. Substantial international aid and economic cooperation are necessary, not only for the sake of international peace, but also for the sake of overcoming hunger and structural poverty in the less developed nations. This development is not to be expected as long

as the upper classes in the rich nations determine the manner in which our needs can be satisfied and set the model for the good life. Furthermore, the present exploitative international economic order is reinforced by the existence of small economic elites within most Third World countries, who profit from the development of capital- and import-intensive industries, worsening the condition of the rural and urban poor.²⁰ Thus the realization of a just international economic order as a precondition for lasting peace requires that economic (and, hence, social) inequalities be lessened and that economic policies be subjected to popular control, both in the developed and less developed nations. Similar remarks apply to the possibility of the perfect state. The political history of the past two centuries has made clear that Kant was mistaken in claiming that significant social and economic inequalities are compatible with the ideal of the perfect state, provided that we assume that this ideal requires that all citizens enjoy a variety of basic liberties not merely in a formal way but substantially. We should, however, make this assumption; for it is only in this manner that the perfect state can fulfill what Kant sees as its ultimate purpose, namely, to contribute to the realization of the conditions of autonomy for all citizens, setting the stage for the moral society. Thus Kant's social ethics implies that social and economic inequalities must be reduced so that they become consistent with the demand for substantial basic liberties. The upshot of these observations is that it becomes even less plausible to maintain that intelligent devils can organize a perfect state and international peace. The moral connection between the highest political good and the moral society, then, is further strengthened, as compared with my first step of criticism, once it is realized, as Kant realized only insufficiently, that true political peace within and between the states is not to be expected as long as the war of all against all continues in the socioeconomic realm.

The third step is based on the fact that Kant fails to mention institutions that have as their primary task to promote the ends that individuals set for themselves in the moral society. Religious institutions have only a limited function in this regard, and, moreover, Kant argues that religious institutions as we know them will have changed into an invisible church. Further, although Kant accepted the emerging capitalist economy, he did not claim that such an economy seeks to fulfill the task of promoting universal happiness. Last, Kant excludes the state from directly contributing to the common good, arguing that the legislator cannot force us to promote ethical ends. Thus Kant arrives at the view that the mutual

promotion of personal ends is a question of individual morality. This view is unsatisfactory on at least two grounds. First, even if we grant Kant that the mutual promotion of individual ends must take place within the constraints set by the minimal state and a private economy, it does not follow that the moral ideal must remain an "inner" state of affairs. Altruistic agents, if rational, will opt not only for the individual expression of beneficence but also for its social expression—that is, they will establish institutions so as to coordinate and optimize their efforts. Kant's failure to explore this possibility seems to reflect a certain "institutional alienation" in his work, which resulted from extending the alienation we now often experience in our participation in institutions to institutional participation as such. His viewpoint seems to be that practices regulated by "outer" rules are somehow intrinsically morally inferior to those based on "inner" rules. The misguided suggestion is that the main issue at stake is the origin of rules rather than the question whether they are just (i.e., accord with the moral law, or unified will of legislators) and thus can be autonomously affirmed. Besides, this distinction between "inner" and "outer" rules is a relative matter in that "inner" rules are also a social and historical product. As Kant himself notes, practical reason evolved in response to social conflict and the struggle with external nature, and it needs communication so as to flourish. At any rate, Kant holds that the human person is a social being. So why would the human agent in the moral society not wish to express his social nature in a wide variety of *universal* institutions (besides the state)? Why would he not wish that his conduct be guided by rules that are the product of rational collective deliberation and decision making? Second, it is not at all clear why virtuous agents who take seriously their duty to promote the ends of others would wish to opt for the institutional constraints outlined by Kant. More affirmatively, the moral ideal of the realm of ends seems to imply the demand that our present economic institutions be transformed so that they aim directly at promoting universal happiness. (We can hardly blame Kant for failing to foresee that the capitalist economic system would leave behind a trail of immense human suffering, but my point here is to develop the ramifications of his thought for our present condition.) And, since our ends are not only economic (material) in nature, a wide variety of cultural institutions must be changed as well. This requires political cooperation that goes beyond Kant's vision of the perfect state and international peace. In (tentative) conclusion, then—and this is my third step of criticism—the moral ideal of the community of legislators requires

that all our institutions, whether political, economic, or cultural, be changed in light of this ideal, not only so as to set the stage for a unified humanity but also so as to instantiate the ideal and be a hallmark of a moral humanity.

In Part Two I will elaborate some of the arguments in my last two steps of criticism. It will then become clear that these two steps are so many roads from Kant's social ethics to a Kantian socialist ethics. In short, I will argue that since socialism overcomes significant social and economic inequalities which arise from private ownership of the means of production, it makes possible substantial basic liberties and effective political democracy in general. By the same token, socialism is conducive to the cause of peace, but I will pay less attention to this argument. Moreover, I will argue that socialist economic institutions instantiate the moral ideal, because they are to be defined as democratic institutions which aim at the satisfaction of the needs of all human beings. Finally, as we will see in Part Two, these arguments essentially accord with Hermann Cohen's view. Cohen eliminates the distinction between the highest political good and the highest moral good and puts in their place one highest good, a peaceful international order of democratic socialist societies.

CHAPTER V

The Philosophy of History (C): Moral Progress and Revolution

In the preceding chapters we have seen that the French Revolution plays an important role in Kant's practical philosophy. To recapitulate, Kant views the French state after the Revolution as an example of a political order that resembles the natural order as a teleological order; this state shows that, within a good political society, "every member should surely be purpose as well as means, . . . while all work together toward the possibility of the whole" (*Judgment*, p. 221n.; § 65; VI: 453n.). We have also seen that the French Revolution may have influenced Kant's description of the culture of skill as encompassing an increasingly intense class struggle which, we may hope, will lead to a more just state. Last, we have noted that the French Revolution and the enthusiasm it engendered among its spectators supported Kant's hope for moral progress, because this enthusiasm signifies that, when suitable circumstances arise, the spectators, like the revolutionaries, will engage in political action based on republican ideals.

Or, more precisely, I have claimed that Kant is to be interpreted along these lines. I will now argue in more detail for this claim in the first section below, while also considering an opposite interpretation. The issue at stake for social ethics may once more be stressed: the cunning of nature does not suffice to nurture the hope of morally committed persons for progress, and, although

the enthusiasm engendered by progressive epochal political events is in itself supportive of this hope, it needs to be supplemented with the hope that people in appropriate circumstances will *act* upon their moral ideals.

In the first section I will address as well Kant's notion of what constitutes moral progress; I will then turn in the second section to his moral condemnation of revolution and other forms of political revolt and resistance. This condemnation weakens Kant's social ethics; for it leaves little or no room for progressive political action under oppressive conditions. I will examine some attempts to reconcile Kant's view here with his apparent approval of the French Revolution, but, since my primary concern is to develop a viable Kantian social(ist) ethics, I will focus on analyzing his reasons for holding this view in the first place. My conclusion will be that these reasons are inadequate. Finally, in the third section I will offer a summary of Kant's philosophical reconstruction of history and end by briefly assessing his hope for progress from the perspective of the present day.

1. The French Revolution as a Sign of Moral Progress

Kant's discussion of the moral significance of the French Revolution takes place within the context of his addressing the question whether the human race is steadily making moral progress. Kant argues in "An Old Question" that three answers are to be rejected: terrorism, eudaemonism, and abderitism. The *terrorist* holds that the history of humanity is a constant decline into wickedness until annihilation is our fate. Kant replies with sarcasm: "Doomsday is at our doorstep; and the pious enthusiast by this time is already dreaming of the restoration of all things and a renovated world after the time that this one will have perished in flames" (pp. 139–40; VII: 393–94). The *eudaemonist* maintains that the future will bring progress because humanity is gradually developing a better moral disposition. The problem with this view is, Kant says, that "[i]t may always be conceded that the proportion of good and evil elements inherent in our predisposition remains constant." Thus, on the supposition that "[t]he effects cannot surpass the power of the efficient cause," we must conclude that "the quantity of good mixed in man with the evil cannot exceed a certain measure beyond which it would be able to work its way up and thus ever proceed toward the better" (p. 140; 394). The last view that Kant

opposes is the *abderitic hypothesis* that humanity moves toward the good only to fall back later into evil.¹ This is the Sisyphean view of Moses Mendelssohn analyzed in *On the Old Saw*; it presents the history of humanity as a "mere farcical comedy" (p. 141; 395).

Kant continues to argue for what may be seen as a modified eudaemonistic manner of representing history. He holds that the eudaemonist is mistaken in basing hope for moral progress on the alleged fact that humanity becomes less inclined to evil as history proceeds, but that we can nonetheless affirm this hope; for all that is needed to defend the thesis of moral progress is that "we [are] able to attribute to man an inherent and unalterably good, albeit limited, will" (p. 142; 396). The French Revolution as a "historical sign" must show that humanity has such a limited good will.

The general structure of Kant's argument for moral progress is as follows. Once it can be shown that a certain progressive political event in history indicates that a moral cause (i.e., a limited good will) is operative in humanity, we can with confidence look to the future, because we can predict that circumstances similar to those which gave rise to this event in the first place will again prevail, and we can expect that in such circumstances this moral cause will again lead to a progressive political event. Compensating for our lack of historical and sociological knowledge with philosophical ingenuity, Kant states his argument somewhat obscurely in this passage from "An Old Question":

There must be some experience in the human race which, as an event, points to the disposition and capacity of the human race to be the cause of its own advance toward the better. . . . But from a given cause an event as an effect can be predicted if the circumstances prevail which contribute to it. That these conditions must come to pass some time or other can, of course, be predicted in general, as in the calculation of probability in games of chance; but that prediction cannot enable us to know whether what is predicted is to happen in my life. . . . Therefore, an event must be sought which points to the existence of such a cause and to its effectiveness in the human race, undetermined with regard to time, and which would allow progress toward the better to be concluded as an inevitable consequence (pp. 142–43; 396–97).

Kant further explicates his argument by concluding that the event searched for must not be considered itself "as the cause of historical progress, but only as an intimation or *historical sign* (*signum rememorativum, demonstrativum, prognostikon*). Thus it can prove the [moral] *tendency* of the human race viewed in its entirety, that is, seen not as [a sum of] individuals . . . , but rather as divided into nations and states" (p. 143; 397; translation altered).

At first sight, it seems that the French Revolution as the sought-after historical sign is relevant only for the reason that the enthusiasm of its spectators shows that a moral cause is operative in humanity, and not because it also signifies that the moral disposition is to be found in the revolutionaries as well. (Recall that the moral cause here takes the form of a moral interest in the republican state and in the international peace this state enhances.) This cannot, however, be Kant's only meaning, for, as his argument for progress shows, the importance of claiming that the enthusiasm of the spectators indicates that a moral cause is working in humanity is that the spectators (including those of future generations, reliving the revolutionary past) will act like the revolutionaries in similar circumstances. Thus the French Revolution itself is a sign of moral progress in that it makes clear that human agents will act upon their ideals, and the enthusiasm of its spectators is relevant in that it supports the hope that we may expect events like this revolution to happen in the future.

In Chapter II I emphasized one explanation for the fact that Kant directly addresses the enthusiasm of the spectators rather than that of the revolutionaries, namely, to avoid the suspicion that such enthusiasm is based on heteronomous grounds. Now the other explanation there offered may be stressed: most human agents are spectators, and attention to their enthusiasm better supports the hope for many fundamental political changes to come than could attention limited to the revolutionaries alone. The Kantian text corroborates this point. After observing that we cannot exclude the possibility that the French Revolution will finally miscarry and not fulfill the republican promise ("An Old Question" was written in 1798), Kant argues that, even if this happened, his prediction of progress would lose none of its force:

For that event [the Revolution] is too important, too much interwoven with the interest of humanity, and its influence too widely propagated in all areas of the world *to not be recalled on any favorable occasion by the nations which would then be roused to a repetition of new efforts of this kind*; because then, in an affair so important for humanity, the intended constitution, at a certain time, must finally attain that constancy which instruction by repeated experience suffices to establish in the minds of all men (p. 147; 401; italics added).

Kant, then, presents here a good systematic reason for turning primarily to the spectators. The fate of the Revolution itself was uncertain, and, as Kant must have been painfully aware, the early support of the spectators of the French Revolution had signifi-

cantly dwindled.² Yet hope for progress can be upheld, because we may anticipate that, when suitable conditions arise, the enthusiasm of these spectators for republican ideals will be aroused once again, and will lead to political progress; or, more likely, we may expect that spectators of future generations will make attempts in this direction. But there is no certainty here. For Kant there is a thin line between saying that the French Revolution *will not* be forgotten and claiming that it *ought not* to be forgotten. At a later point in "An Old Question" he declares that his thesis that the negative effects of war will eventually bring peace is "heroic medicine" for a humanity which is "*dying from pure improvement!*" (p. 153; 407; translation altered). The same can be said of his "philosophical prophesy" here. And we may add that the hope for progress supported by the "prediction" of future revolutionary change must bring about the real cure and certainty: moral and political action, now. Further, the passage just cited is important in that it states that growing historical experience is also an aspect of the hope for progress. That is, progress is to be expected from the conjunction of the moral cause operative in humanity and an increasing understanding of society, human interaction, and the mechanisms of social change.

Kant continues this passage by offering the final conclusion that "[t]he human race has always been in progress toward the better and will continue to be so henceforth." He adds that if one considers not merely what is taking place in some one nation but rather the participation of all people in such progress, the prospect of an "immeasurable time" is revealed—"provided at least that the first epoch of natural revolution [which took place] before the existence of human beings is not followed by a second one that will push humanity aside to clear the stage for other creatures" (translation altered). This might quite well happen, because "in the face of the omnipotence of nature, or rather its supreme cause which is inaccessible to us, the human being is . . . but a trifle." In an apparent reference to the old regime, but not only to this regime, Kant ends his comments here on the French Revolution with the following inflammatory words: "But for the sovereigns of his own species also to consider and treat him as such [i.e., as a trifle], whether by burdening him as an animal, regarding him as a mere tool of their designs, or exposing him in their conflicts with one another in order to have him massacred—that is no trifle, but a subversion of the ultimate purpose of creation itself" (p. 148; 402).

Recently a different explanation has been offered for Kant's emphasis on the enthusiasm of the spectators rather than on that of

the revolutionaries. Peter Nicholson, in "Kant on the Duty Never to Resist the Sovereign," argues that Kant focused on the spectators because he, like them, was enthusiastic only about the republican *ideals* upheld by the revolutionaries, but condemned their means of promoting these ideals (in *Ethics* 86; 1976: 214–30, p. 226). The strength of this interpretation is that Kant did, indeed, condemn revolutionary activity (a problem which will be our direct concern in the next section). But its weaknesses seem to be overriding. For one thing, Kant's undying personal support for the French Revolution itself is a well-established historical fact (see note 2, above; note 16 below). For another thing, Kant speaks of "wishful participation" of the spectators in the Revolution. But, most importantly, the interpretation does not satisfactorily address the fact that Kant bases his argument for progress on the expectation that present or future spectators of the French Revolution will come "to a repetition of new efforts of this kind." Nicholson's only response in this regard is that Kant hoped for progress through means that remain within the limits set by the (legal) law, in particular, through reform initiated by the rulers themselves (see *ibid.*, p. 227).

Now it is true that Kant at some points expresses the hope for reform from above (which is unobjectionable in itself)³—but to interpret his argument for progress as primarily from this source is implausible. After all, Kant did not say that we may anticipate progress because the rulers of his day were enthusiastic about the Revolution. On the contrary: what proved to him that the enthusiasm of the spectators was moral in nature was that its expression was "fraught with danger" ("An Old Question," p. 144; VII: 398). These spectators, in other words, were living under oppressive conditions in which expression of their democratic aspirations was not tolerated by the prevailing powers, and the logic of Kant's argument is that these aspirations—through political action—will be the main vehicle of progress. Moreover, it is implausible in itself to hold that, under oppressive conditions, progress can in general take place through mere "legal" means. Were we to conclude that Kant's argument was based on this expectation, we should also conclude that it was a weak argument.

All this is not to say that Kant is not best understood as a *gradualist*, both in his ethical and in his political thought. In *Religion* (p. 43; VI: 187–88) Kant describes the adoption of the maxim of holiness as "a *revolution* in [our] disposition," but he consistently continues to argue that the road toward holiness must be seen as a "path of continual *progress*"; that is, it "must be regarded as nothing but an ever-enduring struggle toward the better, hence

as a gradual reformation of the propensity to evil." Likewise, Kant's thesis of progress points to the need for revolutions as the only way to change some oppressive regimes—reform, if possible, is the morally preferred option—but we still should see the overall path of historical progress as gradualist. To explicate this latter point, it is helpful to turn briefly to Kant's discussion in *Peace* of three types of politicians: the political moralist, the despotic moralist, and the moral politician.

What characterizes the *political moralist* is that "he forges a morality in such a way that it conforms to the statesman's advantage" (p. 119; VI: 458–59). This "advantage" typically concerns the personal ends of the political moralist, but Kant also seems to consider the possibility of a political moralist who uses immoral means to bring about moral ends (see pp. 124–25; 463–64). More specifically, such a political moralist maintains that, since the citizens are not yet ripe for higher ends, force and other expedient means of political technology may be used to "help" them along. The danger of this policy is that the ends might not be realized or that the means might even become the end. The *despotic moralist* makes a similar mistake, but not because he thinks that the ends justify the means; rather, his immoral actions result from over-enthusiasm for the moral ends and from political naiveté. Accordingly, Kant states with respect to the despotic moralists "experience will gradually retrieve them from their infringement of [human] nature and lead them on to a better course" (p. 120–21; 460). The *moral politician* provides the proper alternative in that he "so chooses political principles that they are consistent with those of morality" (p. 119; 458). That is, the moral politician does not adapt morality to politics, as the political moralist does; rather, his politics follow from his moral principles. Or we may say that his ends follow from the means, rather than the other way around. Thus the moral politician proceeds in a cautious manner, adhering to the principle of gradualism without losing sight of his ultimate aim. He may be painfully aware that the existing constitution is still far from the ideal, but he also realizes that to push change too strongly might be counterproductive as well as unjust, leading to repression and a worse constitution. Kant concludes: "All politics must bend its knee before the right. But by this it can hope slowly to reach the stage where it will shine with an immortal glory" (p. 128; 468).

Kant's personal view of the morally required rate of change may well have been too cautious,⁴ but this should not prevent us from seeing that his ideas developed along sound lines. Moral terrorism has a long history, whether it is rooted in the idea that

we must—and can—be forced to become morally good, socialist, and so on, or in the mistaken view that a political revolution by itself can bring about a complete change in human nature and expectations. We will see in Part Two that both forms of moral terrorism can be found in—or are the outcome of—Karl Marx's work, and that the gradualism of Kantian socialism involves not condemnation of revolution under all circumstances but rather a rejection of the revolution of moral terrorism. Further, it is interesting to note that *Peace* (1795) was written during the Reign of Terror. Accordingly, we may interpret Kant's criticism of moral terrorism as an implicit criticism of the Jacobin Republic. (Such criticism should not be equated with total rejection of the French Revolution, nor should it be confused with the kind of condemnation to which Nicholson is referring, i.e., the a priori condemnation of revolutionary activity in general.) More speculatively, we may assume that Robespierre was Kant's model for the political moralist (at least, in the variant I have discussed), whereas Danton represented the despotic moralist. Certainly, they seem to fit these categories in some respects.

The question is still open how from Kant's claim that a limited good will is operative in humanity it follows that "[t]he human race has always been in progress." Remarkably enough, although the idea of past moral progress is an aspect of his final conclusion in "An Old Question," Kant neglects to address this question. His only suggestion is that we can extend the thesis of progress to the past because the moral cause is "undetermined with regard to time" (p. 143; VII: 397). My explanation will take this as its starting point. I will also say a few words about the idea of moral progress and its relation to other levels of progress.

We may see the history of humanity, after the awakening of reason, as a gradual overcoming of impediments that block the fulfillment of duties. Poverty, the struggle for survival, unjust legal systems, and war all create conditions unfavorable to obedience to the moral law. So, on the assumption that the moral efforts of humanity are constant, we can expect moral improvement to take place once there is increasing success in the domination of nature, less poverty, a better legal system, and fewer occurrences of war. Kant holds that the French Revolution as a historical sign warrants this assumption, and that, since history shows improvement in these areas—the notable exception being war—the thesis of moral progress is substantiated. Like the eudaemonist, then, Kant sees humanity as making moral improvement, but, unlike the eudaemonist, he does not view this as the result of an increase in

the proportion of good over evil in the human person (or lessened inclination to violate the moral law when it is in the agent's interest to do so); rather, moral improvement occurs because there are fewer occasions and conditions that give rise to immoral behavior. In other words, on the assumption that the human agent has a limited constant good will, he will more often fulfill his duties once progress takes place on the technological level (the domination of nature) and the pragmatic level (society). But the opposite also holds: improvement on the moral level induces, or facilitates, improvement on the pragmatic and technological levels.

Learning processes are an important aspect of the idea of moral progress. We have come to a better understanding of the pragmatic conditions that facilitate moral improvement—that is, an improved understanding of the causes of social unrest, oppression, and war—but we may also assume progress in explicating the requirements set by the moral law. (It is in this vein that Kant in *Religion* traces the evolution of the Judeo-Christian tradition, viewing it as a gradual unfolding of pure religion and, hence, of pure practical reason.⁵) This last point is crucial; for what made the French Revolution and the enthusiasm it produced so significant for Kant was not merely that it indicated a moral disposition in humanity but that this disposition was at last directed toward proper ideals. His formal argument for progress conceals rather than reveals this, since it focuses attention on the hope for future recurrences of proper conditions for collective action toward the republican state (and international peace).

The assumption of an unalterably limited good will in humanity may be interpreted as a minimal assumption; for Kant actually concedes more to the eudaemonist than is suggested in "An Old Question." The culture of discipline makes human agents more susceptible to the demands of the moral law, and we may expect that, once the voice of duty speaks louder, as it were, these agents will increase their moral efforts. This process may be seen as preparation for, or an early stage of, the ethicization of human nature. This ethicization means that the performance of duty will gradually lose its compulsory aspect and be guided by such moral feelings as moral indignation, enthusiasm, solidarity, moral satisfaction, and dignity, depending on the occasion and situation. Moral education, a climate of free discussion, and a free flow of information are factors conducive to the development of such feelings and, hence, to an increase in moral determination. It does not seem mistaken to see history as making progress in these areas, and certainly a moral task lies here.

Whether moral progress or some other kind of progress is the main impetus for historical progress seems to vary with the historical period in question. This insight, I think, is not adequately expressed in Kant's philosophy of history. Any philosophy of history must deal with the following problem: it approaches the past and future progress of humanity from a particular vantage point, which needs to be justified, or at least made plausible. One way of doing this is to ground one's vantage point in certain fundamental historical changes that take place in one's own time. Thus one interprets the significance of the past and the expectation of the future in terms of the present. To live in a time of fundamental historical developments is to live in a privileged present, enabling one to make a reasonable prediction of the future. Kant lived in such a privileged present; his time was a period of fundamental political change, and his prediction that the republican state would gradually be realized has, at least partly, proved to be correct, since this state may be equated with representative democracy. The French Revolution was a highlight of Kant's privileged present. Marx, despite his misinterpretation of the good will as "other-worldly," put the matter succinctly when he said that Kant's philosophy must be seen as the German theory of the French Revolution.⁶

A privileged present is a present (historical moment) nonetheless, and herein lies its limitation. Kant's philosophy of history over-emphasizes political change (as against moral, economic, or other changes) as the force behind historical progress. To be sure, Kant somewhat softens this defect by maintaining, at least in "An Old Question," that political progress signifies moral progress and by arguing in general that economic progress contributes to fundamental political change. Yet, it remains the case that his philosophical reconstruction of history treats the history of humanity too narrowly as political history, in particular as the history of the state. What might have been true of his own time is not necessarily true of the past and the future. Here a brief look at Marx's work is instructive. Marx also lived in a privileged present: his was a period of rapid technological and economic change, and some of his predictions have proved to be correct and may still turn out to be correct. But Marx made a mistake similar to Kant's in claiming that in general changes on the technological level (the economic basis of society) determine and condition changes on the pragmatic and moral levels. Marx's mistake seems even greater; for it often seems that mediation between the levels is altogether lacking in his theoretical discussion of historical progress. The lesson, then,

is that the predominance of one level over the others is a historical variable: it is only at the end of history—that is, in the moral society—that one level will be enduringly the main impetus of all progress; that level will be, of course, the moral level.

2. The Right to Revolution and Resistance

Although Kant was enthusiastic about the French Revolution and although the logic of his argument for progress in this context might lead one to expect him to support revolutionary activity, he actually condemned such activity as violating the moral law. Even in "An Old Question," Kant writes in a footnote that the realization of the republican state "may not come to pass through revolution which is always unjust" (p. 146n.; VII: 400n.). He expresses this view in less restrained fashion in *On the Old Saw*:

[A]ny resistance to the supreme lawmaking power, any incitement of dissatisfied subjects to action, any uprising that bursts into rebellion—that all . . . is the worst, most punishable crime in a community. . . . And this ban is *absolute*, so unconditional that even though that supreme power or its agent, the head of the state, may have broken the original contract, even though in the subject's eyes he may have forfeited the right to legislate by empowering the government to rule tyrannically by sheer violence, even then the subject is allowed no resistance, no violent counteraction (p. 67; VI: 383).

In this vein Kant also declares in *Justice* that the citizen should not be "overly curious" about the origin of supreme authority, lest he infer that it is not "the people's duty to endure even the most intolerable abuse of supreme authority" (pp. 84 and 86; VII: pp. 125 and 127). Apparently, then, Kant holds that, although the ruler who treats his subjects as a trifle subverts the ultimate purpose of creation, it is nonetheless the duty of the subjects to obey.

This surprising and objectionable picture must be modified somewhat if we are to do justice to Kant's over-all view. The claim that the citizen must not be too curious about the origin of the supreme authority, since he may come to think of disobedience, is counterbalanced by Kant's strong plea, in "What Is Enlightenment?" for the unrestricted public use of reason, which entails that the citizen as scholar may openly express his misgivings about the injustices committed by the ruling power (see *On History*, p. 6; IV:

172). This qualification also is added in *Justice*, where Kant states that "if the organ of the sovereign, the ruler, proceeds contrary to the laws . . . the subject may lodge a complaint (*gravamina*) about this injustice" (p. 85; VII: 126). Further, in this same work we find the specification that the supreme power cannot force us to do certain immoral things. As Kant puts it, "a categorical imperative says: 'Obey the suzerain (in everything that does not conflict with internal morality) who has authority over you!'" (p. 139; 179; see also *Religion*, p. 90n.; VI: 244n.). What Kant seems to have had in mind is that passive disobedience or resistance is justified if the ruler seeks to enforce religious beliefs against our will or commands us to perform such blatant violations of the moral law as assassinations.⁷ Last, it is to be noted that Kant states in *Justice* that "the people might have at least some excuse for forcibly [dethroning a monarch] by appealing to the right of necessity" (p. 87n; VII: 127n.).⁸ An "excuse," however, is at best a halfhearted endorsement; it is certainly not a justification.

Kant's enthusiasm for the French Revolution, on the one hand, and his moral condemnation of virtually all forms of political revolt and resistance, on the other hand, have puzzled many Kant commentators. A brief discussion of some suggested (partial) solutions of this paradox is in order. It has been suggested that (a) Kant's condemnation of revolution was deceptive, made in order to avoid censorship of his work.⁹ This thesis is indefensible in the light of what we know about Kant, and it is implausible as well, for, were it true, it would have most likely become apparent in his correspondence and *Reflexionen*. The following suggestion is to be rejected for similar reasons: (b) Kant's emphatic denial of the right to revolution is formulated for "strategic" reasons, in that it is directed against counterrevolution and restoration of the Bourbons.¹⁰ We should hesitate to ascribe such an expedient argument to Kant. Also, if Kant did hold that a distinction is to be made between just and unjust revolutions, why would he not have said so and defended his view? Likewise, we can reject the claim (c) that Kant condemned revolutionary activity because he believed that Prussia, as opposed to France, was not yet ripe for a liberal revolution.¹¹ This would have been an accurate historical observation; but, again, if Kant held this view, why would he not have limited himself to expressing the point rather than arguing in detail that revolution is always immoral?

A more important proposal is (d) that Kant's enthusiasm for the French Revolution and his condemnation of revolution in general are consistent because he approved only *retrospectively* of

those revolutions which led to closer approximations of the republican state, but viewed as immoral all present or future revolutionary action.¹² This proposal, however, faces the same problem as solution (e) that Kant adhered to the doctrine that revolution is to be condemned as evil before the fact, but may be applauded as good after the fact. This doctrine was well entrenched before Kant's time, and Kant did indeed hold that the revolutionary origin of a regime does not in the least undermine its legitimacy.¹³ The problem with both of these proposals is that Kant declared not merely that the effects of the French Revolution are to be applauded but also that the event itself was the praiseworthy product of "a gifted people" ("An Old Question," p. 144; VII: 398). The former claim is consistent with the a priori condemnation of revolution, the latter not. Now if we assume that both proposals address only the first claim, they do not really deal with the paradox of Kant's enthusiasm for the French Revolution; but if we assume that they also address the second claim, then they only reformulate the paradox, as consisting of a conflict between historical judgment and moral judgment. To further clarify my argument, it is to be noted that Kant's moral condemnation of war is consistent with his historical judgment that war has been a driving force behind the development of human capacities; the claim here is merely that good can result from evil.¹⁴ (The broader regulative principle is that we may hope that evil is self-destructive, leading to the good.) Likewise, Kant's moral condemnation of revolution is consistent with approving the progressive political results of the French Revolution. The problem, however, is that in this particular case it seems that Kant in his historical judgment also declares that the "evil" itself (i.e., the French Revolution) is good as well. [I will soon raise another objection to solutions (d) and (e).]

A final solution (f) is that Kant could consistently be enthusiastic about the French Revolution, because he did not see this revolution as a revolution proper.¹⁵ Or, more precisely, Louis XVI was the only revolutionary. Kant writes:

As soon . . . as the chief of state in person . . . also allows himself to be represented, then the united people do not merely represent the sovereign, but they themselves *are* the sovereign. . . .

Thus, a great error in judgment was made by one of the powerful sovereigns of our time [Louis XVI] when he attempted to extricate himself from the embarrassment caused by large state debts by leaving it to the people to take over this burden and to distribute it as they saw fit. The natural result was that he handed over to the people legislative authority [after the calling of the Estates General, May 5, 1789], not only over taxa-

tion, but also over the government. . . . As a consequence, the sovereignty of the monarch disappeared completely (it was not just suspended) and passed over to the people (*Justice*, pp. 113–14; VII: 149).

Kant continues his analysis by arguing that the Estates General could not have made the tacit promise to take care only temporarily of the king's business (the large state debts) and to relinquish sovereign power after it had finished this business; for, "to hold that such a contract has any binding force is self-contradictory by the principle: 'No man can serve two masters'" (*ibid.*, p. 114; 149–50). Following Kant, then, all the steps that the Estates General took after May 5, 1789, were legally justified, including the adoption of a new constitution on September 3, 1791. He argues inconsistently, however, that the execution of Louis XVI was a crime more heinous than murder, for it is an instance of "state suicide" (*ibid.*, p. 88n.; 129n.); after all, in Kant's interpretation Louis XVI no longer represented the state, and, moreover, he engaged in what Kant himself saw as the most punishable crime in the community, resistance to legitimate authority.

Kant's view of Louis XVI as the only revolutionary is implausible. Kant argues that it is the duty of the sovereign to gradually and continually change the existing constitution toward a republican one—rather than to bring about such a change suddenly without consulting the people (see *ibid.*, par. 52)—but was such incremental change not precisely the route which Louis XVI had planned (to be sure, for his own purposes)? Moreover, should we see the pressure that the Estates General put on the monarch as a mere legal pressure, exercised in order to obtain the sovereign power it had already had from a legal point of view? And should we interpret the storming of the Bastille and other collective actions of the Parisian populace in the same terms? In short, Kant's attempt here to reconcile his enthusiasm for the French Revolution with his equally vehement condemnation of revolutionary action raises more questions than it answers; it is difficult to see it as much more than an ingenuous rationalization.

Still, solution (f) is a good explanation for the fact that Kant was enthusiastic about the French Revolution (that is, the Estates General and its legal efforts supported by the Parisian populace), although he denied that there is a right to revolution and active resistance. Certainly, this solution reflects at least part of Kant's thought concerning the issue at stake. Two broader problems, however, remain. First, Kant was supportive not only of the French Revolution but also of the American Revolution and the Irish resis-

tance against English domination.¹⁶ Solution (f) seems of little help here. Second, this solution fits badly with the manner in which Kant grounds his thesis of progress in "An Old Question."¹⁷ [The same applies to solutions (d) and (e).] This thesis derives its credibility from the expectation and prediction that the future will bring popular struggle toward the realization of the republican state. Accepting solution (f) as the whole story, we must, however, draw the conclusion that Kant's thesis of progress consists merely of the expectation and prediction that the existing authorities will voluntarily change their governments into republican forms. And even then there would be, strictly speaking, no *moral* progress; for taking Kant's analysis in the above of the French Revolution seriously, we must infer that such change consists of a revolutionary and, hence, immoral, act. But, be this as it may, the hope that progress in general can take place through reform from above is a hope against all odds. Kant's condemnation of revolution and active resistance and his thesis of progress are at loggerheads, if not textually, then certainly in effect.

There seem to be two major ways of making Kant's practical thought consistent. The first is to place the emphasis on his moral condemnation of revolution and other forms of active revolt and resistance. We must then give less content to the thesis of progress than Kant seems to have given it. Moreover, we must conclude that his enthusiasm for liberal revolutions was merely personal; it has no place within his practical system. And, more broadly, we must conclude that the primary *actual* duty formulated by Kant's social ethics is to protest against injustice from behind the lectern. Hope for fundamental change, then, becomes mainly a question of the cunning of nature. The second way is to reject Kant's condemnation of active opposition to unjust political conditions. Then we can give full credit to Kant's enthusiasm for the French Revolution and other struggles for freedom, as pointing in the same direction marked out by the logic of his social ethics and his argument for progress: moral and political action in a variety of forms is not only morally permissible but our duty. Also, hope can now reach beyond the dialectic of self-interest and become one of praxis. I have tried to show that, all in all, the second way fits best with Kant's over-all view, but ultimately it is to be conceded that such an issue cannot be definitively settled. For my purpose of developing a viable Kantian social(ist) ethics, however, the second alternative is clearly the more promising. So our next concern is to subject to philosophical scrutiny Kant's reasons for maintaining that revolution and active resistance are against the moral law.

Kant's first reason for condemning revolution and active resistance is expressed in the following passage from *Justice*:

[R]esistance to the supreme legislation can itself only be unlawful; indeed it must be conceived as destroying the entire lawful constitution, because, in order for it to be authorized, there would have to be a public law that would permit the resistance. That is, the supreme legislation would have to contain a stipulation that it is not supreme and that in one and the same judgment the people as subjects should be made sovereign over him to whom they are subject; this is self-contradictory. The self-contradiction involved here is immediately evident if we ask who would act as judge in this controversy between the people and the sovereign. . . . [I]t is plain that the people want to act as judge of their own cause [and that is absurd] (pp. 86–87; VII: 127; translator's addition).

At first sight, it seems that Kant is here making the point that there cannot be a positive or legal right to revolution or resistance. If so, his argument need not, and will not, disturb the resister; for the resister appeals not to a legal right to revolt in certain circumstances, but to a moral or natural right. More, however seems to be at stake. Kant argues that sovereign power finds its legitimacy in the idea of the state as a social contract. In this contract the people give up their right to be their own judge and install the rule of law as encompassing the sovereign power, its executive organ, and the judicial authority. Thus the above passage is to be understood as follows. To claim that the people have a right to resist the sovereign power is self-contradictory in that the people have voluntarily replaced arbitrary coercion (in the state of nature each is his own judge) by legitimate and rational coercion (the rule of law) and, yet, they wish to act as judges of their own cause, which is absurd.

A closer look at the idea of the social contract makes clear that Kant is mistaken, even on his own terms. His notion of the social contract is an ideal concept (i.e., an Idea of reason) in that the sovereign power arising from, and legitimated by, this contract expresses the united will. This will is identical with one's own rational or moral will, adhering to the universal principle of justice. In accordance with this, Kant argues that the hypothetical "move" from the state of nature to the rule of law (the "original contract") cannot be seen as a sacrifice by the individual of "his inborn external freedom." Kant continues: "[R]ather, we must say that he has completely abandoned his wild, lawless freedom in order to find his whole freedom again undiminished in a lawful dependency, that it, in a juridical state of society, since this dependency comes from his own legislative Will" (*Justice*, pp. 80–81; VII:

122). Now if the existing state indeed approximates the idea of the social contract, it would be irrational and immoral to resist the sovereign power. But what if the legislative authority designs laws that clearly conflict with the united will and, hence, with the universal principle of justice? Following Kant's justification of the state, we must infer that the more the legislative authority deviates from the idea of the social contract the less legitimacy it has—that is, the coercion it exercises via its executive organ becomes increasingly arbitrary. This constitutes a *prima facie* ground for holding that, in such situations, various forms of resistance are justified and may be indeed our duty, for we ought to depart from a state of arbitrary coercion and seek the rule of law, i.e., the rule of the united will. In cases of extreme legal/political injustice, this duty may even be seen as absolute, on the logic of Kant's account; for such cases are comparable to the state of nature in terms of violation of individual rights, human suffering, and arbitrary coercion, and Kant himself maintains that to leave the state of nature and create the civil union is "the first and unconditioned duty in each external relationship of human beings who cannot avoid influencing one another" (*On the Old Saw*, p. 57; VI: 372). The same claim is made in *Justice*, but Kant adds here even that "everyone may use violent means to compel another to enter a juridical state of society" (pp. 76–77; VII: 118–19).

Kant obviously is not prepared to draw these radical implications from his idea of the state as a social contract. He starts out on a radical road, rightly claiming that this idea implies that "only the united and consenting Will of all—that is, a general united Will of the people by which each decides the same for all and all decide the same for each—can legislate" (*Justice*, p. 78; VII: 120). Thus a good justification is given for the state and legal/political obligation. But then, suddenly, when it turns out that, in the existing state of affairs, the sovereign power is located in an empirical person, who legislates in terms of his particular will, we must accept this and apparently act as if this sovereign power were an expression of the united will. Moreover, we are asked to leave it up to this particular will to bring the legal system closer to the ideal. This is paradoxical. In a critical review of *Justice*, published in Kant's own time, the matter is succinctly formulated:

To our knowledge, no philosopher has admitted the most paradoxical of all paradoxes [except Kant], namely, the proposition that the mere Idea of sovereignty should necessitate me to obey as my lord anyone who has imposed himself upon me as a lord, without my asking who has given

him the right to issue commands to me. [This is an apparent reference to Kant's claim that the origin of the supreme authority is not open to scrutiny by the people.] Is there to be no difference between saying that one ought to recognize sovereignty and a chief of state and that one ought to hold a priori that this or that person, whose existence is not even given a priori, is one's lord?¹⁸

The question is clearly rhetorical, and Kant's obliteration of this distinction implies that reason is abandoned, as it were, between the original social contract (which is at the same time an ideal) and the existing legal/political reality.¹⁹ Despite its critical potential, then, Kant's transcendental justification of the state and legal/political obligation—the social contract is the transcendental precondition of the state and of this kind of obligation—in effect turns out to be a transcendental bow to the prevailing power structure.

Kant's second reason for claiming that revolt and resistance are immoral is that if everyone adopted as a maxim that such actions are permitted in order to seek justice, it "would render every legal constitution insecure and introduce a state of utter lawlessness (*status naturalis*) in which all rights would lose at least their effectiveness" (*On the Old Saw*, p. 69; VI: 385). In other words, Kant argues that the maxim of revolt and resistance for the sake of justice cannot pass the universality test of the categorical imperative, for it contains a self-contradictory policy: one wishes to resist the sovereign for the sake of justice, but, if everyone adopted this policy, it would undermine the conditions of justice because it would lead to legal anarchy (the state of nature).

This argument is inadequate for several reasons. To begin with, it assumes that extremely unjust legal/political systems are essentially different from the state of nature. Granted that this view is implausible, as I have just maintained, it follows that there are some conditions under which Kant's argument does not apply. Or, alternatively, it can be argued that organized oppressive power is actually much worse than legal anarchy and that, therefore, a temporary return to the state of nature (in Kant's sense) is justified (assuming for the moment that Kant is correct in his view that this state is the logical outcome of the maxim of revolt and resistance). Further, the universality argument fails in that it puts all forms of resistance on one line, as if there were no important distinction to be drawn between revolution and, say, civil disobedience.²⁰ The argument does not show that civil disobedience is to be condemned. For, although actions of civil resistance involve the break-

ing of the law, they do not undermine the rule of law as such. To the contrary, their nonviolent nature expresses an affirmation of the idea of the rule of law, and the fact that the civil resister accepts the legal consequences of his conduct points in the same direction.²¹ Also, the maxim of civil disobedience, if universalized, does not logically lead to the state of nature, provided that limitations are placed upon the scope of this form of resistance (or if civil disobedience is so defined that these limitations are taken into account). For instance, the civil resister can operate on the maxim that civil disobedience may be undertaken—after legal means of change have been exhausted—in order to secure for a minority group a constitutional right that the majority already effectively enjoys. Since the aim of the resister is the consistent execution of the law, the claim of self-contradiction does not hold up.²² Thus Kant's mistake is to base his argument on an application of the categorical imperative that paints everything gray. Kant recognizes (albeit insufficiently, as we will soon see) that there are different forms of resistance and that resistance may or may not be guided and motivated by the idea of justice, but, as soon as he turns to apply the universality test, these distinctions are neglected. Selective disobedience to certain laws is transformed into a logical commitment to indiscriminate disobedience to all laws—and, of course, few would wish to argue that the latter is defensible.²³

Given a suitable definition (or limitation) of civil disobedience, then, a policy of protest of this kind is not a self-contradictory policy, in that it seeks justice while logically (but not necessarily factually) undermining the conditions of justice. Comparable arguments can be developed with respect to such forms of nonviolent protest as political demonstrations and conscientious refusal based on political principles. In short, as long as these forms of protest are reformatory in character—that is, directed against certain decisions made by the sovereign but without denying his right to punish—they do not logically lead us back to legal anarchy.

Reformatory actions, however, presuppose that the existing power structure upholds at least minimally decent standards of justice. Once this condition is not satisfied, civil disobedience, demonstrations, and political conscientious refusal may lead to, or become part of, revolutionary struggle. Kant holds that the maxim of revolution for the sake of justice cannot consistently be universalized, but, again, it seems that his argument is based on neglecting important distinctions as soon as the maxim is universalized. The following remark from *Justice* illustrates this point: "If the people were to hold that they were justified in using violence

against a constitution, however defective it might be, and against the supreme authority, they would be supposing that they had a right to put violence as the supreme prescriptive act of legislation in the place of *every* right and Law" (p. 140; VII: 179–80; my emphasis). This inference is incorrect; for in the premise the legitimacy of violence is conditioned by considerations of justice, whereas in the conclusion violence is unrestricted and arbitrary. But perhaps Kant is making here not a logical point concerning the consistent universalization of the maxim of revolution but rather a causal or factual point: he sees an opening wedge; once revolution is justified in a good cause, there will be no way to prevent it from being seen as justified in any cause whatsoever. This does indeed pose a problem, even for reformatory protest, but especially for revolutionary action. Revolution, therefore, seems to be justifiable only as a last resort in a situation of extreme oppression. Moreover, the problem indicates that a variety of limiting constraints must be placed upon revolutionary struggle: the moral and political aims of this struggle must be continuously questioned, and the struggle must be undertaken only if there is a reasonable chance that, both in process and in product, it can avoid the arbitrary violence it seeks to overcome.

Kant's final argument against the right to revolution and resistance also rests upon the categorical imperative. We have seen that one aspect of the topic of the universal-law formula, the natural-law formula, is that the laws of nature are in principle public, the analogical value being that maxims, governmental policies, and juridical laws that cannot become public are unjust. Thus Kant comes to state in *Peace*:

The illegitimacy of rebellion is thus clear from the fact that its maxim, if openly acknowledged, would make its own purpose impossible. Therefore, it would have to be kept secret.

This secrecy, however, is not incumbent upon the chief of the state. He can openly say that he will punish every rebellion with the death of the ringleaders . . . ; for when he knows he possesses irresistible power (which must be assumed to be the case in every civil constitution . . .), he need not fear vitiating his own purpose by publishing his maxims (pp. 130–31; VI: 470).

Again, Kant's view here is mistaken, in that sheer brute force is made into a factor determining whether certain maxims and, hence, actions, can pass the publicity criterion. On this view, we must, for example, conclude that the resistance against the German occupation in the Second World War was wrong, whereas, accord-

ing to the same criterion the occupation itself was not to be condemned, because the Nazis could, thanks to their "irresistible power," divulge their maxims of repression. Further, even if we grant for the moment that the publicity criterion determines whether an action is unjust, it does not follow that rebellion as such is to be condemned. Conspiratorial activity is characteristic of coups d'état rather than revolutions. Revolutionary parties and groups have typically made their goals public in order to seek public support. Thus it seems that Kant's rejection of revolution is partly rooted in his limited understanding of the revolutionary process.²⁴

This conclusion can presumably be extended to Kant's rejection of active resistance as such. In the context of his argument that the universalized maxim of resistance and revolt is self-contradictory, Kant writes:

No matter how the people's real contract with their sovereign may be violated, they cannot immediately react *as a community*, but only as a mob. For the former constitution has been torn up by the people, while their organization as a new *community* is still to occur. This is when the state of anarchy arises with all its at least potential horrors (*On the Old Saw*, p. 70n.; VI: 386n.).

Now Kant is surely correct here if his only meaning is that revolution involves the momentary suspension of the legal community. But more seems to be at stake. Kant poses here a false dichotomy, for he seems to claim that anarchy is the only *factual* alternative to general obedience to the sovereign. This indicates that Kant was insufficiently aware of the possibility of collective and organized reformatory action. It also supports the previous point that his view of revolution is historically limited, in that it does not comprehend the possibility of revolution as initiated or guided by the revolutionary party, imposing discipline upon the revolutionary process. Last, it may be noted that such revolutionary mob action as took place in Paris on July 14, 1789, cannot be properly described in terms of "anarchy." What characterizes such mob action is that it is an organized unity, acting toward a common purpose. This unity is not the result of some formal decision procedure, but rather is created by solidarity and a common opponent and threat (in this case the troops of Louis XVI).²⁵ Granted, "horrors" and popular revolt are not mutually exclusive, but, contra Kant, the revolutionary past has made clear that the greatest "horrors" of revolution typically occur not through mob action but through structured violence from above, whether it comes

from counterrevolutionary forces or from the new revolutionary regime.

To return to the publicity criterion, it fails not only as a standard for judging the legitimacy of legal and political action, but also as a general moral standard. The criterion leads, for example, to too easy moral condemnation of all forms of deception and lying for the sake of humanitarian goals. In general, the criterion invites us to walk with seemingly clean hands through life—but then we must not look back to see all the disasters that our “clean hands” have left behind. The basic problem with the publicity criterion is that it presupposes a world in which all human beings are fully rational in a moral sense. This raises a broader issue. Thomas Hill writes in “The Kingdom of Ends”:

In a world of perfectly rational rule-followers perhaps the imperative ‘Never lie’ would make sense; but not in our world. Once I know that an act is my duty, I should do it regardless of how irrationally others behave; but it does not follow that I should disregard their irrationality when I am trying to determine what my duty is. To adopt our principles *as* ideal legislators seems a good idea; but to make them *for* ideal law-followers does not.²⁶

This dilemma can be solved as follows: the community of co-legislators is the logical point from which we can derive our rules (and in that sense we legislate for—and with—colegislators), but in the application of these rules we must not neglect the factual situation in which we are to act. A conflict between rules may arise, and in that case we must determine which rule is overriding. Alternatively, we may solve the dilemma by further specification and determination of the maxim we wish to act upon, taking into account the fact that we live in a world with immoral agents. Along either line, we can establish that most moral rules have rational exceptions, provided that the clause is added that the immoral behavior of others is not the only ground for such exceptions.

That Kant holds that most moral rules allow for rational exceptions is clear from his “casuistical questions” in *Virtue*, although it is less clear which of the two procedures sketched above for grounding such exceptions best accords with his view.²⁷ Kant, however, wrongly argues that the duty to tell the truth and the duty to obey the sovereign must be seen as absolute.²⁸ His rationale for this standpoint is not difficult to guess: telling the truth is a precondition for any viable human community, whereas obeying the sovereign is a precondition for any viable legal community.

The latter claim, however, is partly based on a confusion; for, as we have suggested above, what is essential to the possibility of a legal community is not that we accept all its laws, but that we recognize the right of the sovereign to punish.²⁹ But, considering all this, under what circumstances, if any, are lying or general political disobedience (i.e., revolution) justified? A good guiding principle is that such actions are justified in order to preserve the conditions of morality—that is, the very possibility of autonomy and co-legislatorship. What supports this idea is that the personal policy of telling the truth at the cost of upholding the conditions of morality is a self-contradictory policy, if universalized. Most clearly, if we must lie in order to save the life of an innocent person, then it is our duty to lie; for the universalized maxim of telling the truth in such a case logically undermines the very possibility of acting on this maxim in the first place. We opt for morality, but we logically fail to act so as to safeguard a necessary condition of morality: human life. Likewise, if revolution is the only effective response left in a social/political situation in which the conditions of morality are systematically violated or eliminated, this response is not only morally permissible but our duty. When reason is beaten back into subterranean areas revolt has to start from there, and a major task of reason, then, is to prevent that revolt from turning into a revenge of oppressed human nature.³⁰

3. Summary and Present Perspective

In his philosophy of history Kant distinguishes four *stages of historical development*.³¹

(a) *The pre-political life*: this is the life of instinct and unmediated unity with nature. The sketch of the Garden of Eden in *Genesis* is a symbolic representation of this stage. The awakening of reason, that is, the development of the technical, pragmatic, and moral dispositions, tears the human agent away from this imagined state of bliss and leads to a new stage of human evolution.

(b) *The state of political conflict and cultural progress*: this is the stage of unsocial sociability. The social aspect of human nature forces the human agent to organize social and political institutions, whereas his unsocial dimension causes these institutions to reflect a particular rather than a universal will. The over-all outcome is conflict, relentless competition, socioeconomic inequality, and war,

forcing humanity to develop all its capacities. That is to say, unsocial sociability leads to cultural progress, including science, technology, social control, and art. Initially, only the upper classes enjoy the fruits of cultural progress, but later some of the culture of the upper classes gradually spreads to the lower classes. Yet class conflict remains and even intensifies, for the lower classes no longer accept their oppressed condition and have slowly acquired the means to change it. Moreover, war between the nations continues from time to time to shake all political and cultural foundations, even increasingly so, as technological and economic progress point to wars of larger scale and greater intensity. Also, progress in these areas makes it possible for preparation for war to become an important social factor during times of peace. Thus we may hope that the hard lessons of history will gradually teach humanity, notwithstanding its foolishness, that it is in its self-interest to move to the next stage of human evolution, while cultural progress provides the means for doing so.

(c) *The state of political peace*: this is the realization of the republican state and peace between the nations, the ultimate end of nature. The unsocial proclivities of the human person are now curbed through the rule of law (the universal principle of justice), guaranteeing the most extensive freedom for each that is possible for all. Universal hospitality, instead of war and colonialism, is the standard of international relations. Political peace facilitates the development of the moral disposition. It also makes possible further progress in the arts and sciences, which, in turn, contributes to moral autonomy through the culture of discipline. Thus political peace prepares us for the final stage of the evolution of the species.

(d) *The state of moral peace*: this is the realization of the final end of creation, the moral society. Political peace is now internalized; it is the product of moral motives rather than of self-interest and coercion—that is, political peace is autonomously affirmed. Further, human agents now not only leave one another free to pursue their personal ends, as they do in the previous stage, but also actively seek to promote one another's ends. Diversity develops no longer through discord but through concord; humanity has at last become a morally unified plurality, a moral totality.

These stages of historical development are also to be understood as *stages of social evolution* and display in this regard a certain developmental logic, although Kant did not explicitly draw this distinction. Thus we can come to recognize, as Kant did, that history is not simply a process of linear progress and that at a given

point in time different institutions are to be located on, or display features of, different levels of social evolution. This insight guides Kant's discussion of the French Revolution (and its historical and moral significance) as well as his analysis of the church and its moral task. The French state after the Revolution moved in the direction of stage (c), and to the extent that political peace here was based on moral motives, we may say that this state offered a glimpse of how the state will be under stage (d), but Kant did not exclude the possibility that everything would fall back into its "former rut," i.e., stage (b). But even if this should happen, the moral and historical significance of the French Revolution would not diminish; for this Revolution has shown that a state along the lines of stages (c) and (d) is a tenable historical ideal. The church, in particular the Protestant church with its emphasis on human autonomy, anticipates some features of stage (d), notwithstanding the fact that it exists in the context of political institutions that reflect stage (b). And, considering Kant's denunciation of standing armies, we may speculate that he saw the military as an institution typical of stage (b) [see *Peace*, Third Preliminary Article for Perpetual Peace]. The stages of historical development approached as stages of social evolution are in need of further explication and more precise description; yet, Kant's general orientation is sufficiently clear to be fruitful for new endeavors in this direction.³²

Kant distinguishes, in addition, three *levels of progress*, corresponding to the capacities that set us apart from other animals:

(a) *The technological level*: progress here involves an increasing domination of nature in order to satisfy a wide variety of human needs.

(b) *The pragmatic level*: progress on this level concerns the increasing capacity to organize human beings in a skillful manner to realize any purpose whatsoever. Kant thinks particularly here of political organizations. Culture and science are an aspect of this level, because progress in this respect makes the human agent more susceptible to rule-governed behavior (of which moral behavior is just one aspect). In our time we would, of course, place science also, and primarily, on the technological level.

(c) *The moral level*: progress here implies that just juridical laws are more often obeyed on the basis of autonomous motives and that human beings seek to promote one another's ends, provided that these ends conform to universal law as such. Progress on this level also means that more and more human agents fulfill the duty to seek just institutions, i.e., the duty to promote the highest good.

All three levels of progress have corresponding learning pro-

cesses. This needs to be stressed above all with respect to the moral level, which Kant failed to do. Moral progress is not only a question of willing to do what the moral law demands (intention) but also encompasses a better understanding of its requirements. Further, progress on each level takes place in stages (b) through (d) of historical development. Kant, however, emphasizes progress on the pragmatic level in stages (b) and (c), viewing this kind of progress as the impetus of moral progress, which then leads humanity gradually into stage (d). Even the state of moral peace displays moral progress, for holiness and the complete elucidation of the moral law set infinite tasks.

Kant draws a final distinction between two *vehicles of progress*:

(a) *The cunning of nature*: human agents in the pursuit of their selfish ends come to set up social and political arrangements that are also demanded by the moral law, notably civil society, and eventually the republican state and international peace. The fools are fooled in that they unwittingly promote the realization of moral ends and the plan of history; and, even if they knew what they were doing, they would show no interest, because their motive is self-interest, not dignity and respect for the moral law.

(b) *Moral action*: political and social ends are pursued as moral ends. The moral activist is guided by feelings of hope, solidarity, indignation, and moral enthusiasm; the primacy of praxis is the point from which all his endeavors are undertaken, including his understanding of history.

Kant interprets his own time as located between stages (b) and (c). He sees the French Revolution and the enthusiasm it created among its spectators as the highlight of an increasing political enlightenment. The spirit of the Enlightenment, as hinted at in "Universal History," was here at last displayed—both in practice and in wishful participation. Further, Kant argues that these events constitute a turning point in history, setting the stage for more republican constitutions to come, and signify, moreover, that a moral cause is operative in humanity. Nonetheless, in most of Kant's historical writings the emphasis is put on the cunning of nature as the main vehicle of progress, and this instrument of progress is seen as sufficient for reaching stage (c). This thesis, however, is a regulative one, intended as an antidote to despair and moral defeatism. There is only one way in which we can definitively assert future progress, and that is for humanity to act upon moral ideals; it is also only in this way that stage (d), or any institutional approximation thereof, can be reached.

I have launched four main criticisms against Kant's philosophi-

cal reconstruction of history. First, he overestimates the scope of the cunning of nature as a medium of progress. To be sure, it is rational to believe and hope that mere self-interest is a factor that pushes humanity toward better political institutions, and it would be misguided to see all past political improvements as derived solely from moral motives. Also, it may be noted that calculated self-interest is in some respects a progressive force as compared to action guided by nationalistic dreams and religious fanaticism. However, as I have argued in some detail, nature alone does not suffice to bring about the highest political good: a society of devils will not opt for the republican state and international peace—although it would be equally mistaken to hold that only a world of saints can realize political peace (as it is defined by Kant). Second, the implication of my first criticism is that more emphasis must be placed upon moral action as a vehicle of progress and hope. The thesis of moral progress based on the French Revolution and the enthusiasm it engendered is here supportive, although it conflicts with Kant's claim concerning the race of devils. A more serious problem is that he, in effect, cuts off the road of moral action in declaring that revolution and active resistance are always morally wrong. Kant fails to draw the conclusion that his idea of the state as an original contract undermines in various degrees the legitimacy of most states of his own time, making nonviolent action, and in some cases even revolution toward the republican state, a *prima facie* duty. Kant's condemnation of the right to revolt or resist for the sake of justice arises from a faulty application of the categorical imperative; a less important factor is his inadequate understanding of processes of change initiated from "below." Third, I have criticized Kant for describing the history of humanity primarily in terms of political developments—that is, the main impetus of historical progress as such is political progress. A minor related problem is that Kant does not always make sufficiently clear that developments on the different levels of progress are best understood as feedback processes—for example, legal progress stimulates *and* presupposes moral progress, and vice versa. A more important related problem is that Kant neglects the need for fundamental economic changes (beyond the evolving capitalist market economy), not only for the realization of political peace but also for moral peace. Fourth, I have criticized Kant for viewing the ultimate aim of history as a mere ideational union of good wills. This is implausible, not only because of the social nature of human beings but also because the optimal realization and coordination of individual ends require institutional efforts. The proper alternative

is to define the moral society as a society of autonomous or co-legislative institutions, aiming at universal happiness.

The whole point of my criticisms has been not to argue that Kant's conception of history is antiquated and is to be studied as a mere piece of intellectual history, interesting in itself yet irrelevant for an understanding of our own time, but to show and further develop its importance for coming to terms with our own historical predicament. It is from this angle that I have discussed the paradox of anamnestic solidarity and the problem that the very idea of moral progress seems to undermine human dignity. Kant's philosophy of history invites us to think about these questions, and it offers a conceptual apparatus that is helpful in the search for adequate answers. It is also in this spirit that I wish to end my discussion of Kant's philosophy of history by briefly looking back to his hopes from the perspective of our own time.

Some of Kant's hopes have materialized, and it does not seem unreasonable to expect that others will eventually be realized as well. In the past century more and more nations have accepted the republican ideal, political participation has increased, and education, of which Kant emphasized the political-emancipatory potential in his early work,³³ is no longer everywhere the prerogative of the upper classes. It is true that much remains to be done in these areas, but the very fact that there is increasing acceptance of the fact that forms of action such as civil disobedience are appropriate to induce such improvements is itself a sign of progress, morally and politically. Further, the United Nations seems to be a step forward toward the cosmopolitan condition, and its Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights may be seen as an explication of Kant's definitive articles for perpetual peace.³⁴ Undoubtedly, much talk about human rights and the rights of nations is a facade behind which policies of repression, imperialism, and nationalism are to be found, but, as Leszek Kolakowski notes, "*[g]enerally speaking, the growth of hypocrisy is proof of moral progress, for it indicates that what used to be done openly and without fear of censure can no longer be done without incurring that risk.*"³⁵ And we may add as a regulative idea, and in accordance with Kolakowski's view, that in the future more and more people will take seriously the standards pronounced in the hypocritical talk; thus an increasing contradiction will develop between the facade and the content of the political system, leading to the system's transformation along the lines of these standards.

These notes of hope may appear misguided and even shallow and banal in light of the fact that our century has seen World Wars,

the Gulag, and the Holocaust, not to speak of other genocides. Moreover, they may seem to be mistaken in light of the current nuclear arms race, making Kant's implicit suggestion more apt than ever that it might quite well be the case that the only perpetual peace that humanity will ever "know" is that of the burial ground (see the openings words of *Peace*). What Ernst Bloch noted two decades ago still seems to be correct: "[T]he category 'progress' is nowadays in disrepute."³⁶ Admittedly, Bloch also notes, as Kant did for his own time, "that history is [often] called a mere dung-heap because one likes to be unable to make history with respect to nearby goals—nearby goals as mediation precisely of distant goals," but the rebuttal of this kind of pessimism, which hides our unpreparedness to engage in social action, does not refute the idea that despair may seem the only sign of moral sensitivity. How can we talk about progress after we have seen hell over and over again in the past eighty years? And what can hope mean in the face of the possibility of a nuclear burial ground for humanity?

From a Kantian perspective, the following five brief comments are appropriate as a response. First, historical progress is not to be understood as a linear process. Kant held that "progress will be *interrupted* now and then, but never *broken off*" (*On the Old Saw*, p. 77; VI: 393). As a regulative idea we may see our century as displaying periods of interruption and so we can still defend the thesis of progress. In this context, it is also to be observed that this thesis does not imply that progress develops uniformly on all levels. Second, the future is always to some extent open, and thus we are justified in hoping that humanity will make progress, even if the odds are against it. The best way to ground this hope is to engage in social action inspired by the ideal of a cooperative society. Third, we can derive hope from the fact that the periods of terror in our century also have been periods of resistance and struggle against all odds. Or, more recently, we can derive hope from such events as the resistance by Polish Solidarity and the popular support it received in at least some countries. In our time, then, no less than in Kant's, there are events of which it can be said that they "give us hope, warm even though small" (*Lectures on Ethics*, p. 253). Fourth, we can always fight against despair. We cannot embrace all the suffering embedded in history, the uncountable nameless victims of oppression, not only in our century but throughout history. But what we can attempt to do is to forget no more and no less than is needed to act in their name, in the name of humanity, toward a better future. This means that we ought to believe in the possibility of progress insofar as this is

necessary for engaging in praxis. Fifth, it is a mistake to interpret the social disasters of our century as signifying a moral degeneration hitherto unknown in human history. What has happened is that progress on the moral level has not kept pace with progress on the technological and pragmatic levels. The over-all result has been that the suffering caused by social conflict has offset much of the tremendous gains made in reducing the suffering caused by the human body and external nature. History always has been a slaughterhouse, but our century has seen an increasing perfection of the tools of oppression: ingenious weapons of destruction, and a hitherto unknown capacity to organize human beings for any purpose whatsoever.³⁷ Evil has not increased; to the contrary, it has only become much more effective. This is also the picture of the future. All in all, we can cautiously affirm that our moral, social, and political situation has not worsened and that further gradual improvements in these areas are to be expected. This might, however, not be enough. The ever-increasing capacity for technological and pragmatic control holds a great promise for the cooperative world community, but presently also points to the real possibility of its total negation. The moral task, then, has not become more hopeless since Kant's time, but it has become more urgent than ever before.

PART TWO

Kantian Socialist Ethics and the Problem of Morality in Marx

CHAPTER VI

Hermann Cohen: From Social Ethics to Socialist Ethics

Although Kant launched some criticisms against the emerging capitalist economy of his own time, he saw this economy in general as a progressive force and was a fierce defender of the right to own private (productive) property.¹ Through a short critique of some of Kant's more detailed proposals concerning the state, I will argue in the first section below that such support for capitalism is incompatible with his own republican ideal. Thus a first basic logical link emerges between Kant's social ethics and socialism: socialist economic institutions are more harmonious with the republican ideal than capitalist ones. A second, and more important, such link is that (properly defined) socialist economic institutions instantiate the moral ideal of the community of legislators, in that they are fully democratic institutions which aim at the satisfaction of the needs of all human beings.

Both these links, particularly the latter, are elucidated in the work of Hermann Cohen, to which I turn in the second and third sections below. The merit of Cohen's practical philosophy is not limited, however, to this socialist transformation of Kant's ethics. What also deserves attention is that Cohen explores ethics as social in nature more consistently than did Kant. Finally, my concern in the rest of this study is to show the relevance of Kantian socialist ethics to socialist theory and praxis. For this purpose I offer in

Chapter VII a Kantian analysis and critique of Marx's view of morality. My over-all thesis is that certain profound weaknesses in Marx's social thought can be overcome by infusing Kantian socialist ethics into the Marxian system.

1. Kant, the Republican Ideal, and Capitalism

A closer look at Kant's conception of the good state shows that he severely restricts political participation. The right to vote is limited to a rather small group of citizens, the active citizens. Kant states:

Every man who has the right to vote . . . is termed a *citizen* . . . The only necessary qualification, aside from the *natural* one of not being a child or a woman, is that he be *his own master* (*sui iuris*): that he own some sort of property—among which may be counted any skill, craft, fine art, or science that supports him. This is to say that whenever he needs to acquire things from others in order to live, he will acquire them only by *disposing* of what is *his own*, not by allowing others to use his services, so that he will not . . . be anyone's servant but the community's (*On the Old Saw*, pp. 63–64; VI: 378–79).

Thus, self-employment, besides sex, is the main criterion of active citizenship, although Kant also includes servants of the state, such as university teachers, in the class of active citizens (see *Justice*, p. 79; VII: 121).

To make a *natural* property (sex) into a criterion of co-legislatorship, i.e., active citizenship, contradicts the view that reason is the mark of autonomy. We may assume that historical limitations and bias also play a role in Kant's claim that wage-earners cannot be active citizens, and, yet, his view in this regard is not altogether mistaken and has, moreover, a critical implication. Kant holds that the attribute of civil independence cannot be ascribed to the laborer because he does not own the products of his labor and is therefore radically dependent on the will of others.² This claim is more reasonable than the contrary contention that such economic dependence on others does not at all undermine the possibility of an informed and independent political choice, certainly if we consider the situation of the laborer in Kant's time. The critical implication is that the economic basis of society must be so restructured that it eliminates the dependence of the worker. Kant, however, does not take this step, but rather offers a critique of the

feudal aspects of his own society as well as a plea for its liberal-capitalistic transformation. Kant proposes as a consolation to the passive citizen that

[e]ach member of the community must be permitted to rise in it to any status or class . . . to which his talent, industry, and luck may take him. And his fellow subjects may not block his way by any *hereditary* prerogative, as members of some specific privileged class, to keep him and his heirs beneath that class forever (*On the Old Saw*, p. 60; VI: 375–76; cf. p. 64; 380).

Careers, then, must be open to talents, and, in general, hereditary privileges that run counter to a “fair” competitive struggle for economic success must be eliminated, not only for the sake of economic well-being but also for the sake of active citizenship. It is in this same liberal-capitalistic spirit that Kant says that the law should not so protect the large land-owning class that their estates always remain in the hands of their descendants or any other given segment of society (see *ibid.*, p. 64; 380). The farm laborer must have the possibility of becoming a small landowner and thus acquiring the right to vote. We may interpret Kant’s rejection of permanent ownership of land by the church or the state in the same terms (see *ibid.*, and *Justice*, pp. 91 and 136; VII: 131 and 175).

The limitation of political rights to economically independent male citizens is another example of the fact that reason is abandoned, as it were, between the original social contract and the existing legal/political reality. Or, more precisely, this is to a large extent the case; for the state and political obligation are justified in terms of a radical and fully democratic act, encompassing all the members of the commonwealth, whereas the status quo on Kant’s account needs to be transformed only so that self-employed males and servants of the state become truly members of the commonwealth.

Here the additional problem arises that the idea of the social contract points to direct democracy rather than to representative democracy. Kant maintains that in the republican state the people rule themselves through representatives whom they have chosen in free elections (see *On the Old Saw*, p. 64; VI: 380). Now, provided that the representatives indeed represent the will of the people, representative democracy may well be the best pragmatic solution to the problem that large-scale direct democracy is a practical impossibility. But there is, of course, no guarantee that the representatives in the republican state will not so legislate as to

benefit limited interests, even though their legislative activity must proceed within a constitutional framework that embodies the universal principle of justice.³ This means that the republican ideal requires more political measures than Kant envisioned: perhaps a recall system of elected citizens or referendums, and certainly the possibility of active participation of all citizens in a variety of intermediate political organizations and institutions. It also means that the republican ideal and capitalism conflict with each other; for capitalism operates on the principle that social issues directly related to the economic realm, such as industrial policy, employment, and pollution, are essentially private questions, to be settled by those who own the productive assets of society. To be sure, governmental economic interference does take place in present capitalist societies, but this is seen as a necessary evil to straighten out the irrationalities of the market, and the interests of capitalists are best served by a system of overlapping political and economic elites. Capitalism, then, has the inherent tendency to privatize and depoliticize the public realm,⁴ and is, therefore, antithetical to the republican ideal of universal political participation as a crucial step toward the formation of laws that reflect the will of all.

An even more serious problem with Kant's political analysis is that he holds that legal equality and great economic inequality are compatible. He asserts in *On the Old Law*:

The *equality* of subjects may be phrased as follows: Each member of the community has rights that entitle him to coerce every other member. . . .

But this thorough equality of persons as the subjects of a state is quite consistent with the greatest inequality in the quantity and degree of their possessions. . . . Thus [if] the welfare of one person is greatly dependent on the will of another (the poor depending on the rich), one must obey . . . when the other commands. . . . Nonetheless, they are equal as subjects *before the law* (pp. 59–60; VI: 374–75; translation altered).

We have already noted that Kant undermines legal equality in the proper sense of the word by placing restrictions upon political rights, a problem which he seeks to sidestep here by arguing that legal equality involves that "all men are free and equal *under* public law as already enacted, though they are not equal with respect to the right to *enact* that law" (*ibid.*, p. 62; 378). But even if we set aside this issue, Kant's view is still untenable. For one thing, great inequalities in income and wealth conflict with the equal right to a fair trial; for the rich and the poor do not have equal access to legal

advice and representation. For another thing, the wealthy can disproportionately influence the judicial process, and, hence, it is to be expected that in a society of great economic inequality the laws will be so framed that they favor the rich in terms of the allocation of legal penalties. And, more broadly, a legal system that upholds significant economic inequality arising from private property ownership also weakens equality with regard to such liberties as freedom of speech and press; for the wealthy have a greater possibility of expressing their views than the poor and can, moreover, through their control of the means of communication largely prevent views opposed to their interests from reaching the realm of public debate.⁵

These mechanisms for creating civil and political inequality, however, are nowadays widely acknowledged, as is exemplified by such recent governmental programs within capitalist society as free legal counsel and public funding of political debates and elections. What remains to be seen is their long-term effectiveness. It seems a mistake to deny that such programs can considerably improve the legal and political condition of the poor, but it also seems that it would be stretching the matter too far to maintain that they can make the legal and political process equally accessible to everyone. After all, the root of the problem is capitalism itself. Add to this our previous observation that capitalism by its very nature discourages the effective exercise of our political rights, and we can draw the conclusion that Kant's republican ideal cannot be fully realized within a capitalist economy. Or, at least, this conclusion follows if we take Kant's claim seriously that the republican state is to be defined as a state that guarantees the most extensive liberty for each that is possible for all.

Considering Kant's more specific recommendations concerning the state, it might be objected that the republican ideal does not mean that the state must strive for equality with regard to the possibility of effectively exercising our freedoms, but rather that it must only prevent arbitrary intrusions upon our liberties. This objection is subject to three problems. First, it is difficult to see how such nominal rights can ever bring about the republican ideal of laws that reflect the will of all. Second, the objection is hard to reconcile with Kant's justification of political obligation and the state in terms of the original social contract. Why would rational agents opt for a legal system that safeguards their liberties only in formal fashion? This choice becomes particularly unlikely once these agents are aware of the fact that the idea of working one's way up in capitalist society through "talent, industry, and luck" is

mainly an illusion. Admittedly, this idea may have seemed more plausible in Kant's own time, but this only underlines the historical limitations of his political thought and helps to explain why he did not come to a rejection of capitalism in the name of the republican ideal. Third, and most importantly, the objection clearly conflicts with Kant's view that the major moral function of the state is to contribute to the realization of the conditions of autonomy, setting the stage for the moral society. This function presupposes substantial equal liberties, not formal ones. Such liberties as freedom of speech and press can serve here again as examples; for these liberties are conducive to legislative activity (autonomy) as a dialogical activity only if all different moral views and arguments can be effectively expressed. Also, an important aspect of Kant's notion of autonomy is that the rule of law is seen as self-rule, but we can hardly expect such a moral attitude in general to develop within a legal system that is not accessible to all and favors some in terms of the allocation of legal punishment.

Especially the moral-preparatory function of the republican state, then, fits ill with the idea of this state as a minimal state; for the effective fulfillment of this function requires that the state take such measures as guaranteeing equal access to the media and legal counsel. Note, moreover, that Kant holds that education is crucial to autonomy, and so again it seems that the logic of his view of the good state points beyond the minimal state, in that the moral-preparatory function of the republican state indicates the need for public education available to all. Even Kant himself, however, does not specify the republican ideal as a pure minimal state, because he claims that the state must play a role in social welfare:

The general Will of the people has united itself into a society in order to maintain itself continually, and for this purpose it has subjected itself to the internal authority of the state in order to support those members of the society who are not able to support themselves (*Justice*, p. 93; VII: 133).

More specifically, Kant argues here that, since the existence of the wealthy "depends on the act of subjecting themselves to the commonwealth for the protection and care required in order to stay alive, they have bound themselves to contribute to the support of their fellow citizens." Thus Kant concludes that taxation of the wealthy is justified in order to establish such public institutions as "widow's homes" and "foundling hospitals," as well as for the sake of such welfare programs as "relief to the poor."

It is debatable whether this argument for public welfare is

compatible with Kant's view that the state may not enforce direct ethical duties, although Kant could appeal to the fact that there is a distinction to be drawn between actively promoting the ends of others and helping people in severe or even life-threatening distress.⁶ It is even more debatable whether Kant's proposal of taxation of the wealthy for the sake of public welfare can be reconciled with his specific defense of private property ownership. Once it is granted that the purpose of the social contract is not merely to prevent arbitrary intrusions upon our basic liberties (among which the right to own private productive property is not to be counted) but rather to guarantee that everyone can effectively enjoy such liberties, the argument for public welfare however, no longer poses a problem. After all, the satisfaction of the most basic material human needs is a necessary condition for the effective exercise of basic liberties, whether in the present or in the future. The same can be said of the need for medical care. More generally, if the task of the state is to promote the conditions of autonomy, it must sustain the material conditions of human life. It may be noted, however, that rational moral decency itself offers a good ground for social welfare provided by the state; for charitable institutions can neither guarantee nor efficiently realize social welfare,⁷ and, as Kant observed in one of his *Reflexionen*, such welfare is, indeed, a question of moral decency. He wrote: "The helpless poor must be fed, and, if they are children, they must be cared for. Why? Because we are human beings and not beasts."⁸

In sum, there are good reasons for interpreting the republican ideal as a state that seeks to uphold substantial equal liberties and the conditions of autonomy in general. And again, this means that the republican ideal and capitalism are incompatible. Or, to put it otherwise, the republican state requires for its complete realization a re-socialization of private productive property. That Kant nonetheless offered a defense of the institution of private property, thus both factually and by implication compromising his republican ideal, is hardly surprising considering his time. The institution of private property was the rule within Kant's historical horizon,⁹ and he was not altogether mistaken in hoping that capitalism would be conducive to the realization of civil and political liberties. In addition, Kant's support of capitalism and a rather minimal state can be explained on the basis of his hatred of the paternalism of feudalism, while his belief in the "moral necessity" of the institution of private property as such seems to be partly rooted in his failure to draw a clear distinction between personal and productive property.¹⁰ For our purpose of developing a viable Kantian socialist ethics,

however, it is not essential to analyze here the factors that account for Kant's commitment to capitalism and the individual right to own (virtually unlimited) productive property. Rather, we must conclude our discussion of Kant by briefly addressing the question of whether a socialist transformation of his ethics is at all compatible with his justification (deduction) of this right.¹¹

Kant begins his legitimation of the institution of private property by distinguishing between two modes of possession: "sensible possession" and "intelligible possession." The first mode signifies the physical possession of an object, whereas the second mode involves the "purely *de jure* possession of the same object" (*Justice*, p. 51; VII: 47). His point is that ownership is distinct from mere physical possession. Accordingly, Kant defines ownership as follows: "A thing is externally mine if it is such that any prevention of my use of it would constitute an injury to me even if it is not in my possession (that is, I am not the holder of the object)" (*ibid.*, pp. 55–56; 51). He further states: "The question of how it is possible for something to be externally yours or mine is now transformed into the question: How is purely *de jure* (intelligible) possession possible?" (p. 56; 52). Our present concern, then, is Kant's answer to this question.

For Kant any legal right and claim, if valid, must be seen as an expression of the united will. This means that the right to private property must be conceived of as arising from this will. In other words, private property is justified only on the condition that the united will via the social contract permits private property. Now, if the united will is to be able to institutionalize property along these lines it must possess in the first place that which it permits to be privately appropriated: the earth and all its products. Kant calls this original common possession the "original community of the land" or the "innate common possession of the earth's surface" (*ibid.*, pp. 57 and 58; 52 and 53). Thus the possibility of private *de jure* possession is based on two practical postulates: original common ownership, and a social contract permitting private ownership. In contrast to such liberal contract theorists as John Locke, then, Kant does not hold that there is a natural right to property which precedes the social contract and can only be affirmed by it.¹² This is not to say that Kant views all acts of physical appropriation in the state of nature as arbitrary usurpation. Rather, he holds that such acts, if performed under the presumption of the two postulates, result in "provisional *de jure* possession." Civil society then transforms such possession into "peremptory possession" (*Justice*, p. 66; VII: 59).

We have here again an instance of the fact that Kant's justification of a certain social institution has ramifications that point beyond this institution or even to its opposite: private property is rooted in a decision of the united will to give up the common possession of the earth and its products.¹³ Now precisely because Kant grounds the right to private property in this manner, rather than seeing it as a natural right, his practical philosophy *permits* the conclusion that a re-socialization of private productive property is required for the sake of the only innate or natural right that Kant recognizes: "[f]reedom (independence from the constraint of another's will), insofar as it is compatible with the freedom of everyone else in accordance with a universal law" (*Justice*, pp. 43–44; VII: 39). I have argued that we also *should* draw this conclusion, because Kant holds that this innate freedom comprises "innate equality" (i.e., legal equality) and "a human person being his own master" (i.e., civil independence), and we have seen that equal freedom for all in these respects cannot be reconciled with great economic inequality. A re-socialization of private productive property is, in other words, needed for the sake of the full realization of the republican ideal. This also is required in order that economic institutions reflect the moral ideal. Finally, both theses are set forth in Cohen's work. It should be noted at the outset, however, that Cohen fuses the two theses together into one basic imperative of Kantian socialism: all our social institutions should be so changed that they mirror the moral ideal of the community of colegislators who seek to promote one another's ends.

2. The Basic Premises of Cohen's Practical Philosophy

Cohen's work may be divided into three major stages. In the first stage his intellectual labor was focused on writing commentaries on Kant's three *Critiques*.¹⁴ In the second stage Cohen developed his own system of pure philosophy, mirroring Kant's search for the transcendental conditions of (rational) thinking, willing, and judging: *Logic of Pure Cognition* (1902, 1914), *Ethics of the Pure Will* (1904, 1907), and *Aesthetics of Pure Feeling* (1912). The third stage runs from Cohen's resignation at the University of Marburg in 1912 until his death (April 4, 1918). During this period he taught at a rabbinical seminary in Berlin, and, although he wrote various moral and political studies, his major intellectual efforts at this time were invested in exposing, and further developing, the progressive

moral dimensions in Judaism, culminating in his posthumously published *Religion out of the Sources of Judaism* (1919).¹⁵

My concern in this study is Cohen's ethics and political philosophy as developed in the second stage, notably in *Ethics of the Pure Will* and in the closing sections of "Introduction and Critical Epilogue to Lange's *History of Materialism*" (1896, 1902, 1914).¹⁶ In the present section I will outline the basic premises of Cohen's moral and political thought; in the next section I will discuss in some detail his argument that the moral society or highest good is a cooperative socialist society. I will deal with Cohen's critique of the historical materialism of Marx in Chapter VII.

Individual and Totality

Cohen opens the *Ethics of the Pure Will* by stating that ethics constitutes the most truly philosophical discipline—the sciences cannot take the moral question away from philosophy—and that the concept of the human person (*Mensch*) is its subject matter. But how is this concept to be understood? Cohen states:

How about the human person; is he an individual? By no means is he this alone; he also stands as rank and file within a plurality (*Mehrheit*), or better, within many pluralities. And he is not only this; in the totality (*Allheit*) he first completes the circle of his being. And this totality also has many degrees and levels until its completion in a true unity, namely, in humanity, which is at the same time an eternal new beginning (*ibid.*, p. 8).

Cohen adds: "This insight must become the basic idea of the construction of our ethics."¹⁷

This basic idea encompasses at least five related claims, which will be further explicated in the course of this section. The first is that the individual always functions in a variety of collectives and that morality, therefore, is intrinsically social. The second claim is that the individual who takes his own particularity, or that of the group he is part of, as sole guide of his willing and actions cannot come to truly moral actions; for morality aims at coherence or unity of individual wills and, ultimately, at a unified humanity. (Like Kant, Cohen defines a totality as a unified plurality and holds that existing pluralities lack unity because they are determined by particular wills.) Thus the third claim is that the individual can "complete the circle of his being"—his autonomy—only through making ideal humanity at the highest level of totality into the mirror and goal of his willing and actions. This claim implies a

fourth: autonomy sets a task, and its ultimate realization requires the realization of humanity, the transformation of existing pluralities into totalities. To sum up the last three claims, on Cohen's account, the idea of humanity—and, hence, that of the ideal self—is both the beginning (origin) and the end of truly moral actions. (That Cohen speaks of "an eternal new beginning" reflects his view that morality sets an infinite task.) The fifth and final claim is that the subject of morality and history is not the individual qua individual but the individual as part of collectives. The problem that ethics faces is the conflict between the individual and the collectives; its task is to reconcile the two, both in theory and in praxis.

Cohen's view of the relation between individual and totality implies criticism of both liberalism and totalitarianism as the two dominant political ideologies of our century. In "Critical Epilogue," Cohen writes that "every community [or, better, society¹⁸] has the purpose of creating the true individual, for this individual can arise only from a real, healthy, and developed community; that this individual be created is, and remains, the true goal of all formations of communities" (p. 272). Cohen adds a little further on: "Ethics has as its task both problems, the community and the individual, and these concepts are to be seen not as standing beside each other or as one after the other, but as requiring and determining each other, as reciprocal concepts (*Wechselbegriffe*)."¹⁹ Cohen and liberalism, then, proclaim the intrinsic value of the individual, but Cohen repudiates the liberal contention that this implies that political society must be seen as a mere instrument for the realization of individual purposes. Liberalism fails to recognize that the realization of the individual requires the realization of the community; it places the concepts of individual and community "one after the other." (Liberalism in its dominant form is not merely an individualism but also a *possessive* individualism; I will later discuss Cohen's critique of liberalism's twin, the market economy with private ownership of the means of production.)¹⁹

In a similar fashion we may interpret Cohen as rejecting totalitarian thought. He emphasizes the collective as moral, political, and historical subject (see *Pure Will*, pp. 33–34), and this might lead one to believe that his view has totalitarian overtones. Contrary to totalitarianism, however, Cohen does not place the collective before and above the individual, but sees them as "requiring and determining each other." The final rationale of any totality is the individual, and not vice versa, as in the totalitarian view. The

latter view entails not the promise of the realization of the autonomous individual, but rather the threat of his complete negation. In short, Cohen seeks an alternative to both liberalism and totalitarianism which is in some sense located above them. This alternative is democratic and cooperative socialism as the true unity of individual and society.

Thus far there are some important affinities between the social ethics of Kant and Cohen, although the latter's view is, of course, geared more toward our present political condition. Cohen's claim that pluralities must be transformed into totalities conforms with Kant's contention that existing social and political institutions must be brought into accord with the realm of ends or moral society (and note once more that Kant defines this society as a unified plurality). Moreover, Cohen's idea that the individual must make the totality, which is in its highest form a unified humanity, the guideline for his willing and actions accords with Kant's view that one ought to act only on those maxims which are consistent with universal law as such or accord with the idea of humanity. Last, both Cohen and Kant hold that practical reason (the pure will) in projecting humanity as it ought to be also posits the ideal self, and vice versa.

Yet there are important differences between their respective views, as well. Cohen stresses to a greater degree the social nature of morality and praxis. The praxis of the individual is situated in social groups and, hence, understood as cooperative and collective praxis. This insight is not clearly manifest in Kant's work. As Goldmann observes in *Immanuel Kant* (pp. 172 and 178), the "I" rather than "We" is emphasized in Kant, and the effect of this neglect of collective praxis is that the prospect of fundamental social change is darkened. (Goldmann argues that Kant's view that the existing church is to be changed into a "true church" constitutes a notable exception, but we have seen that Kant holds that collective praxis within the framework of religious institutions is a sign of moral immaturity, to be left behind by the truly autonomous individual. Kant's comments on the French Revolution constitute a more convincing exception.) An additional difference between Cohen and Kant is that Cohen rejects Kant's contention that the moral ideal cannot, in the final instance, be expressed in institutional arrangements, but must be thought of as an "inner" unification of good wills. We will see later that Cohen holds that there are various instantiations of the moral totality, notably, the legal state, peace between the nations, and the producer cooperatives.

*The Transcendental Method and the Notion
of the Legal Person*

The decisive, albeit related, difference between Kant and Cohen, however, must be sought in the manner in which Cohen applies the transcendental method, leading to the moral law and the ideal moral subject. In a nutshell, this method proceeds as follows: it searches for, and starts with, an *X*; it looks for the rational presuppositions of the *X*; and it argues that without these presuppositions the *X* is unintelligible. The second step is regressive and analytic in form; the third step is synthetic and provides a justification (deduction) for the right to use the presuppositions in question as well as all their logical consequences. For Cohen the *X* must be the sciences. Thus he maintains that "all philosophy is directed toward the fact of the sciences (*das Faktum der Wissenschaften*)" and that this view is what "counts for us as what is eternal in Kant's system" (*Pure Will*, p. 65).

Cohen argues that the critique of knowledge in Kant seeks to expose the *a priori* structure of the natural sciences. This means that critique of knowledge, i.e., epistemic logic (*Logik der Erkenntnis*), must be developed on the basis of the foundations and methods of the natural sciences. Or, as Cohen puts it, epistemic logic must be seen as a construction and elaboration of mathematical assumptions as they operate in the natural sciences; that is, epistemic logic must, in a methodological sense, orient itself toward mathematics. By analogy, we would expect Kant's ethics to orient itself toward the sciences dealing with human actions and prescriptive rules, the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Cohen comments:

In general, one sees the weakness of ethics in the fact that it is not backed up by a science. The expression of moral certainty has, therefore, a derogatory meaning. One gives up on the possibility of basing ethics on a science. Accordingly, when one does not in a fundamental way fall back on religion, one takes refuge in a psychology of moral sense or an esthetics of moral feeling. . . . Even Kant, who looked for and demanded a fact analogous to mathematics, did not find it in a science. He separated jurisprudence from moral theory, and laid down different metaphysical elements (*Anfangsgründe*) for each of them (*Pure Will*, p. 67).

In other words, Cohen holds that Kant recognized the need for a moral philosophy as the logic of the humanities but failed to find a science that (by analogy) could serve as the mathematics of the

humanities. Thus Cohen sets for ethics the task of finding a humanistic science, from which it can construct and explicate the moral law and the ideal moral subject (just as epistemic logic is developed from the mathematics of the natural sciences). In short, the task is to apply the transcendental method to an appropriate humanistic science.

In his long Introduction to *Pure Will*, Cohen discusses several humanistic sciences, such as psychology and sociology, that possibly could function as the mathematics of the humanities. For our purposes it suffices to present his conclusion, which is already intimated in the passage cited above: "Jurisprudence is the analogue of mathematics. It may be characterized as the mathematics of the humanities, and for ethics, in particular, jurisprudence may be characterized as its mathematics" (p. 66). More specifically, Cohen argues that the ideal moral subject and the corresponding moral law can be constructed through an analysis of the transcendental conditions of the notion of the legal person, claiming that the cooperative (*Genossenschaft*) provides us with the best model for the legal person.

There are three distinct reasons why Cohen thinks that the notion of the legal person constitutes an important concept for ethics. First, the notion of a legal person is nonnaturalistic—that is, the legal person is not to be identified with a physical person, but must be understood as a rational construct. In Cohen's own words, "[i]t would be a basic mistake to equate a person with a human being. . . . The individual may be given as a particular being (*Einzelwesen*); the person, however, is an abstraction of the law" (p. 230). Now, in agreement with Kant's view, Cohen argues that the moral subject, the individual person or humanity, must be seen as a rational construct that sets a task and is not to be equated with the physical individual (the phenomenal self) or with humanity as an anthropological notion. Thus the legal person can function as a model for the moral subject. Second, Cohen holds that it is a positive aspect of the legal person that "emotions do not play a role; the concern is only action of the will . . . as legal action" (p. 236). Here again Kant's view is manifest, in that the contention is that emotions are irrelevant, and even may misguide us, in the determination of our duties. Moral reason must not be adapted to our feelings; rather, the opposite must take place. Cohen illustrates this point in his discussion of patriotism, an emotion that is all too often a source of human conflict.

Although Cohen thinks that it is not altogether misplaced to praise patriotism as a feeling which promotes the overcoming of

egoism and which helps to break down the barriers of self-love, he also maintains that patriotism involves the "serious dangers" of "one-sidedness" and "pettiness" which conflict with cosmopolitanism (p. 235). The antidote is the notion of the legal person. Cohen writes in the context of his discussion of patriotism:

The jurisprudential exposition and grounding of the ideal subject in the legal subject is more instructive, more convincing, and at the same time more precise and to the point than all the other expansions of self-feeling, with which one loves to liberate and save the individual from the limitations of stubbornness and selfishness (p. 235).

Yet Cohen does not completely reject the feeling of patriotism; rather, his "strategy" is typically Kantian in that he argues that this feeling must be ethicized. Patriotism must be transformed into love for a people that seeks the perfect state and the cosmopolitan condition.²⁰ And this, we may assume, can be accomplished in the process of enlarging the self on the basis of the notion of the totality as legal person; for this notion points to the idea of a unified people and, ultimately, to that of a unified humanity, as the horizon of one's emotive and moral identification.

The final reason for the importance of the notion of the legal person for ethics is that the rational presuppositions of this notion explicate the idea of the totality as a unified plurality, and with it the moral law and the ideal moral subject. Cohen sets forth these presuppositions in the following passage concerned with the cooperative as legal person:

[I]n the concept of the cooperative the issue at stake is no longer the individual will . . . but rather the real unity of wills. . . .

These wills unite into a common will, because the various persons unite into a whole. Which concept represents this whole? Which concept justifies it? Plurality or totality? . . . The difference between totality and plurality lies in the logical power of the infinite concentration of single members, which as a result no longer come into question as singulars.

When the cooperative as a whole becomes qualified to take on this logical character of totality, this can only be on the basis of an action of the will through which the cooperative becomes a legal activity and entity. This legal action is formed through the decision. . . . The decision is the unification of individual wills into a unified will. This unified will does not belong to any of the individual wills; it is a common will (*Gesamtwille*). . . .

From the legal point of view, it is said that this common will does not represent the sum of the still existing wills but that it annihilates these

and puts itself in their place. Nonetheless this representative will is the true real will. . . . This representative unified ideal will forms the unity of intention and the unity of the person—the concept of the legal person (*Pure Will*, pp. 230–31).

In this manner, then Cohen applies the transcendental method to the notion of the legal person: this notion presupposes that the divided and antagonistic wills of the plurality are overcome through a common decision, the by-laws of the cooperative, expressing a unified intention, action, and willing. The cooperative as legal person, in turn, can serve (and is justified) as the model for other totalities, such as the perfect state arising from the social contract, and the federation of states. Moreover, a model is presented for the ideal moral subject: the individual must become a legislator in the various totalities, and the collective subject must become a unified will. All these notions set, of course, moral tasks; they are regulative notions. Finally, the moral law is explicated in that it must be understood as demanding that all our actions be consistent with, and reflect, the ideal of the totality on its various levels. This also means that it is our duty to realize the different levels of this ideal.

In a long review essay on ethics and socialism, published in 1909, the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies offered a critical but sympathetic discussion of *Ethics of the Pure Will*. One of his major objections is that “[t]he legal person has totally nothing to do with morality, except insofar as the existence of a legal order has as such moral significance.”²¹ Tönnies adds: “Cohen nonetheless tries hard to force upon the legal person a direct moral value.” Presumably, the crux of this criticism is that in legal practice the legal person lacks the moral aspects that Cohen ascribes to it. This is to be admitted. A private enterprise, for example, is dealt with as a legal person, and in this instance the legal person reflects not a unified will but rather the will of some of those who are working in the enterprise. Likewise, the cooperative does not always take on the form expounded by Cohen; the cooperative may be a collaboration of private enterprises that share a common interest.²² It also may be objected that the notion of the legal person carries with it the danger that individuals may abdicate their responsibility and place it on the shoulders of a fictional person, the legal person. The hands of the concrete individuals are clean; only the fictional person has dirty hands.

These objections, however, rest upon a misunderstanding of what the transcendental method seeks to accomplish. One

rationale for Cohen's turn to positive law is that ethics must provide a "systematic critique" of the legal system, contributing to its moral improvement (see *Pure Will*, p. 270). So the question is not whether in legal practice the legal person has the moral significance Cohen ascribes to it but whether it ought to have this meaning. Undoubtedly, Cohen's view is that, if the notion of the legal person is to be a coherent notion, it must satisfy the transcendental conditions he has exposed—notably, it must display a unified will arising from the wills of its constituents. This implies that the idea of a private enterprise as legal person is self-contradictory; this enterprise is a plurality in reality, but in name a totality. The issue of corporate responsibility underlines the problem and also signifies its practical import. It seems reasonable to hold the private corporation as a whole responsible for its actions, and yet the conditions for this are lacking; for, in holding it responsible, we make, in effect, all its participants responsible, whereas in reality only some members are directly responsible, namely, those who determine the policy of the corporation. In the next section I will argue that this internal inconsistency is one of the reasons why private enterprise must be socialized and take a form similar to that of Cohen's cooperative. This transformation also avoids the problem of the legal person's becoming the mask behind which "dirty hands" are hidden; for in the cooperative all the individual wills contribute to the formation of the unified will and ideally merge with it.

The transcendental method, then, has a critical edge. This is no different in Kant's work; for we have seen that his transcendental analyses of legitimate legal authority and of private property logically lead to a justification of social action toward the perfect state and to the possibility of socialized productive property. The issue is more complex with regard to the moral law. Kant argues in *Practical Reason* that the moral law does not need a transcendental justification, but is a "fact of reason." Instead he deduces the practical reality of freedom from the moral law (see *ibid.*, p. 49; V: 54). Nonetheless, a case can be made that the moral law in Kant receives a transcendental justification in that it constitutes the necessary presupposition for making "moral experience"—that is, the sense of duty and moral necessity as discussed in the *Foundations*—intelligible. Or we may see the right to use the categorical imperative as based on the fact that it is precisely this principle that leads to some of our most deep-seated moral convictions. But, in either case, once the moral law is established and defended, this law pushes our moral experience and conviction to higher levels.

Purity (the *a priori*) leads to purification, i.e., idealization and ethicization.

The limitations of the transcendental method are the limitations of the "facts" toward which it orients itself. We always are in some sense free to reject these "facts" and with them the results obtained by the method. As Beck puts it with respect to the argument that the moral law is needed to make our moral experience intelligible: "The argument would have made no headway against a critic who stubbornly refused to concern himself with moral phenomena, just as the *Critique of Pure Reason* would make no dent in the armor of a silent skeptic who refused to assert or deny that $7+5 = 12$ " (*Commentary*, p. 172). (Beck uses the word 'would' because he says that, although one would expect Kant to apply the transcendental method to our moral experience, he did not in fact follow this road.) Now from this angle it may seem that Kant's transcendental procedure, as hypothetically projected here, is to be preferred to Cohen's, because it "appeals" to a wider and more generally accepted "fact." This conclusion, however, is mistaken on several grounds. First, Cohen also "appeals" to a wide range of human experience, to wit, our functioning, or, better, dysfunctioning, in social organizations and institutions. Second, Kant's orientation toward the sense of duty and moral necessity is an orientation toward an inner and subjective feeling. Cohen, to the contrary, takes as his starting point an objective fact that is, in principle, accessible to all. What if one lacks the feeling to which Kant is making an "appeal"? Moreover, Kant's point of departure is reflected in the end product inasmuch as the moral society is, in the final instance, an "inner" unification of good wills. Cohen, however, begins and ends with an institutional arrangement. This, as well as Cohen's reasoning from the collective ideal moral subject to the individual ideal moral subject (whereas Kant traverses the opposite road), is more fitting to the task of developing a social ethics. Third, Cohen overcomes the "institutional alienation" embedded in Kant and sets forth the ideal of the totality as regulative for *all* human institutions. The great gain in turning to the legal person as exemplified in the cooperative is that the socioeconomic realm is subjected to moral analysis and critique. Last, Cohen's procedure leads to the elimination of Kant's bifurcation of law (the doctrine of justice) and morality (the doctrine of virtue) in that both receive the same philosophical grounding in a radical contractarianism.²³ This not only is elegant from a methodological point of view, but also opens up, more clearly than in Kant, the road toward ethicization of the law.

The (Ideal) State

What still needs to be discussed is Cohen's more detailed view of the totality on its various levels. In the rest of this section I will focus on the (ideal) state as a mediating form between the individual and humanity, although I will also say a few words about Cohen's view of the federation of states. I will deal with the producer cooperative in the next section.

For Cohen the state must be seen as "a legal concept, as the concept of a legal person," and it is only in this fashion that "in the concept of the state the unity of a totality is created" (*Pure Will*, pp. 80 and 79, respectively). The implication is that universal suffrage is a necessary condition for the very existence of the legal state. Cohen writes in his short essay "The General, Equal and Direct Right to Vote" (1904):

The state is also a person. Only as a person has it unity. . . . The person of the state must be based on the will of the state. . . . The right to vote is the fundamental right in which the will of the state originates. This right constitutes the state.

. . . . If the execution of the right to vote falls short, then the foundation of the state fails; it may be a power state (*Machtstaat*), but it has not become a legal state. The will of the state has become silenced; the state has failed to become a person and unity.²⁴

Thus Cohen opposed the autocratic German nation of around the turn of the century, and declared (indirectly) his sympathy with the German Social Democratic Party as the frontrunner of the movement toward full democracy. (Although Cohen's comments here seem to be particularly addressed to the Prussian constitution with its indirect three-class voting system, they also apply to the Imperial constitution; for in either case only the almost powerless lower chamber was elected.)²⁵

It is in the context of this struggle for full democracy that Cohen's other remarks in the essay cited above are to be situated. He dismisses, for example, such standard arguments against (representative) democracy as that it leads to the oppression of the "more qualified" by the "less qualified" masses, by observing the hypocrisy embedded in this view: as soon as the concern is national defense, these distinctions disappear like snow before the sun; then everyone seems to be good enough to represent the nation. Most interesting is his rebuttal of the claim that the majority of the people are not yet "ripe" for the right to vote and will use this right to promote their own limited interests rather than to seek true freedom for all. Cohen replies:

It is a fundamental mistake to think that the individual can become mature and independent any other way than by his independent cooperation with regard to the state—that is, in the first place through his co-foundation of the will of the state. This is the greatest danger that is created by the common conception of religion, as if religion, without law and state, were able to bring human beings to moral emancipation. The direct right to vote is the precise instrument for the moral education of the people (*ibid.*, pp. 333–34).

Here again, we see that Cohen adheres to one of the basic premises of Kant's social ethics: structural political change is a precondition for human emancipation rather than the other way around. But Cohen proceeds in a more consistent manner than Kant in upholding this primacy of the "structural"; for Kant limits the right to vote to economically independent male citizens, apparently assuming that the vast majority of the population can become morally emancipated without fundamental change of their political condition. An additional difference is that Cohen does not seek moral emancipation beyond the political realm, as Kant does inasmuch as he sees the perfect state as a preparation for the moral society; rather, Cohen views political emancipation as moral emancipation.

Cohen holds that compulsory education is a building block of the modern state and that this state should provide for public education for all (see *Pure Will*, p. 515). One of his arguments for this view runs as follows: "The state should never entrust the responsibility for education to other institutions; for this responsibility is a responsibility for morality. And the sovereignty of the state is rooted in morality" (*ibid.*, p. 517). To this it might be objected that the state should guarantee only that some political education be part of the curriculum of public schools, with the aim of cultivating or strengthening the individual commitment to uphold and improve the laws of the state. In other words, one may wish to leave moral education in the hands of such institutions as the family and religious organizations. This objection is, however, partly misguided; for the concern here is social ethics, and social ethics and political education are intrinsically related. Cohen offers the additional consideration that such institutions as the family and religious organizations are "relative communities," since they display particularity, whereas the state is ideally a universal institution (see *ibid.*, pp. 63, 78, and 588). Accordingly, a moral education that seeks to represent the interest of all citizens (and, ultimately, the interest of humanity) cannot be the responsibility of such institutions as the family and religious organizations alone.

Nonetheless, an important worry remains, and perhaps this last argument even adds to it: Does Cohen not put too much emphasis on the state at the cost of smaller human organizations? This question may be further explicated in two different ways; so there are two questions. The first is whether Cohen, although he avoids and repudiates totalitarian thought on the conceptual level, does not in effect move closely to this kind of thought, or, at least, to its dangers, since he fails to stress the importance of institutions that can prevent the dissolution, as it were, of the individual into the state. This question gains urgency in light of his (well-known) unrestrained enthusiasm for the state. The second question is whether Cohen did not expect too much from the state as a source of moral/political education and emancipation at the cost of, say, the family, local democratic political bodies, and even the cooperative.

Although Cohen suggests that some claims made by the state have a certain priority above those made by the family—a view which he does not further explicate²⁶—he does not deny the significance of the family as a mediating institution between the individual and the state. This is clear from his critique of Plato's proposal to abolish marriage among the members of the ruling class and to regulate their reproduction through the community of women. Cohen argues that this proposal is to be rejected not because it violates some sexual moral code or because it may be detrimental to human reproduction (to name just a few standard objections to Plato's proposal); rather, Plato's main mistake here is to be sought in the fact that "although he orients the I to the state, he at the same time also dissolves the I into the state; he does not hold up against each other the poles of the I and the totality."²⁷ Cohen adds that Plato fails to recognize that loyalty or faithfulness (*Treue*) is the essence of love—that is, through faithfulness mutual physical attraction is brought to a higher plane in the form of a mutual concern for "spiritual well-being." The "meaning of marriage" and the family as a whole is "education and habituation to faithfulness," and, accordingly, Cohen deplors the situation already arising in his time in which the elderly are seen as a nuisance.²⁸ Moral poverty in this regard signifies general moral (and political) poverty. Cohen also views faithfulness as a political virtue directed toward the community and ideal humanity, and, thus understood, this disposition has close affinities with what I have called the moral commitment to change the world in light of some moral ideal.²⁹ All things considered, then, we may interpret Cohen as holding that moral education within the family and through the

state are ideally complementary, each in their own way aiming at the formation of morally committed individuals. Certainly, the foregoing observations make clear that Cohen is far from denying that the family has some independent role to play in the moral education of the individual.³⁰ And this means again that, on his account, the family is to be treasured as a barrier against possible "dissolution" of the individual into the state.

It also is to be noted that Cohen places the cooperative between the individual and the state. As compared to Kant, Cohen says little about the possible mediating and emancipatory functions that may under certain circumstances be ascribed to religious institutions. His concern is rather the moral significance of religion as such. What needs above all to be stressed, however, is that the state in Cohen's work stands for the ideal state, the law (justice), and the rights of the individual. Cohen proposes not that we uncritically embrace the existing state but rather that we identify ourselves with the ideal state which represents the will of all and that we seek to transform the empirical state from this angle. The following passage from *Pure Will* illustrates the point. It also shows that Cohen was well aware of the worry embedded in the first of the above questions, and, together with his remarks on the family, it should lay to rest this worry:

Our ethics may perhaps be regarded as being infected with the oppressive odium of orienting the consciousness of the self by the state, whereas in fact the empirical state corresponds so little to this ideal and so frequently and emphatically makes a mockery of it. Nonetheless, even this state must, in the logic of its own impulsion and however unwillingly, tend and serve that ideal. . . . *It is true that the empirical state is the state of the estates and of the ruling class—not the legal state.* The power state can become the legal state only by developing the law in accord with the idea of the state rather than in the interest of the estates and classes. The latter are relative communities. . . .

The state of justice, to the contrary, has only one goal: moral self-consciousness. . . . *The self-consciousness of the state is the self-consciousness of all its members* (p. 615).³¹

And, to stress the issue perhaps more than is necessary, we may observe that Cohen writes a little further on that the right of the individual (*Menschenrecht*) is a precondition for the state, adding that without this right "the state is a shadow of the state" (p. 616).

Yet the problem posed by the second question remains, and the passage cited above even reaffirms it. What is the logic inherent to the *actual* state which pushes it toward the ideal? The dialectical logic of self-interest (the cunning of nature), as in

Kant's historical writings? My guess is that Cohen's logic of hope must be sought elsewhere, namely, in the struggle for the right to vote and effective democracy. At the time that Cohen wrote these words there were at least some, albeit faint, indications that this struggle was paying off and that Germany was moving toward a parliamentary system. In this sense Cohen's logic was well taken. To be sure, democracy came too late in Germany, to the extent that it came at all, to prevent the totalitarian and racist tide that soon destroyed it, but we must not forget that, for Cohen (like Kant), the logic of hope is at the same time a logic of social action. What is the problem, however, is that it seems that Cohen had too high an expectation of the possible moral and political educational effects of universal suffrage. Or, to put it otherwise, Cohen may have underestimated the gap that exists between representative democracy and the ideal state of informed citizens who actively contribute to the formation of universal laws.

Consider again his claim in "The General, Equal and Direct Right to Vote" that "[t]he direct right to vote is the precise instrument for the moral [and, hence, political] education of the people." Recent political history supports the more modest claim that representative democracy has some emancipatory effects but also poses the problem of genuine political participation. Cohen rightly holds that moral/political maturity and independence can be reached only through participation, but the question is, How can democracy mean more than voting for political elites? It seems that Cohen's hope concerning the emancipatory effects of democracy is justified only if democracy involves the active participation of all citizens on a wide variety of political levels. Additionally, referendums, the possibility of recalling representatives, and active participation in cultural and educational institutions may be needed as well. Thus it seems fair to say that Cohen puts too much emphasis on the state as such as a source of emancipation. In his defense, however, it is to be noted once more that he also views the family as a possible source of moral emancipation. And, more importantly, Cohen holds that not only public education for all is a precondition for the ideal state but also the limitation of property (see *Pure Will*, p. 615). This latter claim involves the dual claim that a well-functioning democracy requires the elimination of great socioeconomic inequality as well as the creation of the cooperative as a mediating institution between the individual and the state. The cooperative in Cohen's writings is a fully democratic institution and, we may assume, also a platform for political participation in the state.

A final criticism that I wish to direct at Cohen's view of the state is that he offers few specifics concerning the proper goal and limits of the state (the law). Kant, to the contrary, places definite limits upon the state; he sees the state as guarantor of "negative" rights, not of "positive" (i.e., human) rights. It is clear from Cohen's notion of the state as legal person that he rejects these limits, and the same follows from his professed socialism. For Cohen the state must not only play a role in creating conditions that make possible the pursuit of individual ends, as for Kant, but must also directly contribute to the realization of these ends. Likewise, the state must not only remove the obstacles to autonomy, but also create conditions that directly favor autonomy. Thus we may, for example, assume that Cohen supported the socialist demand at the time that the state make funds available for starting cooperatives.³² Such programmatic specifics, however, can seldom be found in his work, and this is a weakness in his political analysis and proposals.

To avoid misunderstanding, let me add that I do not think it is the primary task of the moral philosopher—although it may be *a* task—to develop all the practical ramifications of his ideal model. Also, Cohen's model implies that it is up to the people to spell out the terms of their legal contracts—both on the level of the cooperative and of the state—and this is undoubtedly a sign of the moral strength of his model. Yet, it seems appropriate that the philosopher provide some practical guidelines based on his model, even if only because this would facilitate our understanding of his model. To give another example, we may assume that Cohen held that the state must provide a wide variety of welfare programs. (The ideal, of course, is that the need for most of these programs will disappear, but we must also be concerned with the road toward the ideal.) These programs are often thought of as involving conflicting rights claims, and hence it does not suffice that Cohen merely argues that the good state must protect individual rights. This problem of a lack of specifics indicates another difficulty, namely that it never becomes clear in his work precisely how he sees the relation between the family, religious institutions, the cooperative, and the state. Cohen definitely does not wish to sacrifice the independence of these institutions for the sake of the state, but, in order to evaluate his contention that a certain priority must be ascribed to the state, we must know specifics of his view that cannot be found in his work.

The highest legal expression of the totality is the federation of states. Cohen argues that the ideal state must aim at this end and

even presupposes its realization, thus constituting a link between the individual and a unified humanity:

[I]n spite of all the sovereignty due to the state, international law from of old holds before it the notion of a *federation of states* and makes it an ideal for the state; it prescribes to the state the great teaching: the state is unable to fulfill its concept unless it is able to elevate and to purify its individuality in a federation of states. Hence, in the state, also, man becomes the carrier of humanity (*Religion of Reason*, p. 14).

This view largely accords with Kant's, although there is the usual difference that Cohen sees the political ideal itself as an instantiation of the moral ideal. Programmatically, Cohen goes only one step beyond Kant in that he gives more content to the third definitive article for perpetual peace, the right of hospitality. Kant says that the stranger has the right to be treated in a peaceful manner, provided that he fulfills the duty to come in peace, and adds the qualification that "[o]ne may refuse to receive him when this can be done without causing his destruction" (*Peace*, p. 102; VI: 443). It is this latter point that Cohen elaborates:

It is the duty of any government, from both an ethical and a religious point of view, to grant protection to the stranger oppressed in his own country. Probably no political measure ever taken by England has so enhanced its standing among the nations as its introduction of the right of political asylum (though this act might quite possibly lead to conflicts with other countries).³³

Cohen wrote these words in a passionate plea for admitting the oppressed East European Jews to the German Reich, which is also a plea for the German nation to embrace the moral tradition of Kant and, we may add, of Cohen himself. In retrospect, the urgency of this plea for cosmopolitanism and the rights of the individual cannot escape us.

3. The Cooperative and Worker-control Socialism

Cohen's claim that capitalist private enterprise must be transformed into the cooperative is common to the German socialist tradition of the 19th century. We can find, for example, this claim in the work of Ferdinand Lassalle, who played a crucial role in the shaping of the first German working-class socialist party, the Gen-

eral German Workers Association (1863), as well as in the work of Friedrich A. Lange, who initiated Kantian socialism.³⁴ Within this tradition a distinction is drawn between consumer and producer cooperatives (associations). Only the latter type of cooperative requires for its realization a fundamental overhaul of the capitalist economic system, and, following Cohen, I will continue to use the term 'cooperative' to refer to the producer cooperative.

Cohen's main contribution to the cooperative movement is his philosophical explication and defense of the cooperative as legal person. Cohen presents an alternative "logic" to the logic of capitalism. The logic of capitalism is naturalistic, whereas the logic of socialism, as propounded by Kantian ethics, is constructive—that is, ideal entities must overcome the limitations of natural entities. More specifically, within the capitalistic-liberal tradition, ownership of the means of production is wedded to the natural person, whereas Cohen proposes that this type of ownership be placed in the hands of a constructed person, a legal fiction, namely, the legal person. Cohen's notion of the cooperative suggests that he held that this legal person must own the means of production; but I will later consider the possibility that his view was that the socialization of the means of production requires that the state as legal person fulfill this role. In either case, private property is limited to personal property, and, Cohen suggests, we may then hope that the "eternal" human obsession with property will come to an end (see *Pure Will*, p. 615).

Two other aspects of Cohen's view of the cooperative may be mentioned at the outset: economic democracy and the overcoming of the division of labor. The cooperative is a thoroughly democratic institution; its bylaws reflect the will of its members and set forth the general policy and purpose of the cooperative. Also, on Cohen's account, the cooperative can act as a legal person only if its actions are determined in a democratic fashion within the limits set by its bylaws. The equal right to vote (one person, one vote), then, is a *sine qua non* of the cooperative as legal person, just as it is for the state as legal person. Thus the production of economic goods becomes a truly collective task and responsibility. Furthermore, we will soon see that the cooperative must seek to overcome the intellectual and moral deprivation resulting from the division of labor within capitalist private enterprise. Most radically, Cohen suggests that all members of the cooperative should become scientific producers, engaging in the infinite task of uniting scientific and moral laws.

The Critique of Capitalism

Cohen's argument for the cooperative must at least partly be placed and judged in the context of his critique of capitalist private enterprise. Thus three questions arise: Which are his major points of criticism of the capitalist economy? Are these points of criticism well taken? And, finally, does the cooperative provide an adequate answer to all the problems embedded in these points of criticism? I will initially focus on the first two questions and end this chapter by systematically addressing the third. My discussion will be based not only on Cohen's text per se but also on its ramifications. In addition, I will turn to some recent writings which offer a further analysis of the same issue which essentially mattered to him: worker-control socialism. I will mean by 'capitalism' an economic system in which labor power is a commodity, most economic activity is directed toward producing goods and services to sell on a free market, and the means of production are in general in private hands.³⁵ Thus my use of the term 'capitalist private enterprise' refers to both family-run businesses and corporations that are "publicly owned." 'Private' is to be contrasted not with 'publicly owned' but with 'socialized.'

In *Pure Will* Cohen expounded a thesis which soon became almost a slogan of neo-Kantian socialism: the third formulation of the categorical imperative, the humanity-as-an-end-in-itself formula, expresses a clear and undeniable criticism of the capitalist economic system and sets forth, moreover, in synoptic fashion, the idea of socialism. In a word, Cohen contends here that capitalism is to be condemned because in this economic system the worker is doomed to function as a mere means for the ends of others (i.e., the capitalists). After citing the third formula, Cohen describes its positive aspect: "The deepest and most powerful meaning of the categorical imperative is expressed in those words; *they contain the moral program of a new era and the entire future world history. . . . The idea of the priority of humanity as an end becomes the idea of socialism, which defines each human as an end in itself, as purpose* (*ibid.*, pp. 320 and 321). Karl Vorländer, a pupil of Cohen who made the synthesis of Kantian ethics and Marxism into his intellectual life-task, repeated this same idea throughout his work. In one of his earlier essays, "Die neukantische Bewegung im Sozialismus," he states: "No one has yet shown me that the moral idea, which undeniably lies at the basis of socialism, the thought of the community, can be more simple and clearly expressed than in the

highest command of Kantian ethics, which teaches us that humanity in the person of each individual must always be seen as an end, never as a means only."³⁶ And to give a more recent example, the French neo-Marxist Lucien Goldmann writes in his *Immanuel Kant* (1967): "Indeed, Kant succeeds in concentrating into a few words the most radical condemnation of bourgeois society and in formulating the foundations for any future humanism. . . . Once we realize that [the third formula] condemns any society based on production for the market, in which other men are treated as means with a view to creating profits, we see the extent to which Kant's ethic is an ethic of content and constitutes a radical rejection of existing society." He continues: "Moreover, and no less radically, it lays the foundations for any true humanism in establishing the only supreme value upon which all our judgments must be based. That supreme value is humanity in the person of each individual man—not just the individual . . . , but the *human* totality, the *community embracing the whole of humanity* and its expression in the *human person* (pp. 176–77)."³⁷

Cohen's contention met sharp criticism already in his own lifetime. The orthodox Marxist Karl Kautsky attacked his view in *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* (1906). He launched two basic criticisms. The first, which will be our concern in the next chapter, is that the moral law is superfluous in the socialist society. Kautsky states:

The programme of the "entire future world history" is conceived in somewhat narrow fashion. The "timeless moral law, that man ought to be an end, and at no time simply a means," has itself only an "end" in a society in which men are used by other men simply as means to their ends. In a communist society, this possibility disappears and with that goes the necessity of the Kantian Programme for the "entire future world history."³⁸

Kautsky's second criticism is that "the would-be 'socialist' principle which fixes the Personality and Worth of men is . . . just as consistent with Liberalism or Anarchism as with Socialism" (*ibid.*, p. 58).

We may suspect that Kautsky's view is colored by ideological considerations and commitments in that he, as an orthodox Marxist, had at the outset little sympathy for Marburg socialism and its revisionist leanings (see Appendix, below). However, even Tönnies, who was sympathetic to the political program of the neo-Kantian socialists, affirmed Kautsky's second criticism in the review essay cited earlier. After quoting Kautsky's remark on

the "would-be 'socialist' principle," Tönnies states: "This is not only correct, but Kant himself thought, no doubt, about [this principle] only along the lines of liberalism." Tönnies then continues to argue that the "humane employer" is justified in claiming that he does not treat his workers as mere means because his end—the economic success of the company—is also their end in that their livelihood depends on this success. Moreover, the humane employer may, for the sake of the worker and not for his own sake, make a yearly contribution to the local employment office, which again shows that the Kantian imperative can be satisfied within capitalist society ("Ethik und Sozialismus," p. 924).

The critiques of Kautsky and Tönnies can partly be dismissed as irrelevant. The very fact that Kant himself adhered to liberalism is not the issue at stake; rather, the question is whether socialism can be convincingly extrapolated from his ethics. Furthermore, their criticism rests on the common misunderstanding that Kant's ethics is an individualistic or private ethics. The target of neo-Kantian social and moral critique is not the individual capitalist but the class of capitalists or, better, the capitalist economic system. We may grant that some capitalists are more humane than others, which is of little interest in itself, but the real issue is the question whether the capitalist economic system as such implies that the working class is in some sense forced into the position of "means only." In what sense? The answer to this question may be intuitively clear, but it needs to be explicated and defended. Perhaps we should criticize Marburg socialism for holding that this sense is undeniably clear; yet Cohen certainly gives a definite meaning to the third formula of the categorical imperative. His meaning accords with my exposition in Chapter I: the humanity-as-an-end-in-itself formula demands that all individuals become co-legislators in the social, economic, and political institutions in which they participate. The cooperative fulfills this command, whereas the capitalist private enterprise violates it. The worker joins this latter enterprise, but not because he agrees with its objectives or because he hopes that through a common decision he can determine its objectives and policies (as in the cooperative); rather, he works out of necessity. Entering through the gate of the factory, he is not his own lawgiver, he is not an autonomous being or co-legislator; his will is determined by another will—the will of the capital owner. Or we may say that the will of the worker in the socioeconomic realm is determined by the principle of capital accumulation. Heteronomy, then, is the fate of the worker under capitalism, and this is just another way of saying that the core of capitalism is the

domination of the worker. As Cohen puts it: "The meaning of the labor contract is domination. . . . The owner wants to be ruler in his own house, and he means by his house not [only] the four walls of the factory but [also] the labor community, which he may dominate through legal transaction" (*Pure Will*, p. 605). It is precisely this domination which signifies that under capitalism the working class is treated as means only; the workers serve as instruments for capital accumulation.

Cohen underscores this condemnation of capitalism by arguing that the labor contract implies that the capitalist has control over the "single action" of the worker. He sees this evidenced in jurisprudence, citing the following definition by the legal theorist Carl Friedrich von Savigny: "We call obligation [as, for example, imposed by the labor contract] the relation of domination of a single (*einzelne*) action of an alien person" (*ibid.*, p. 604). Cohen comments:

The owner desires control over the isolated action and becomes in this manner in fact the owner of the person. This is the legal course of the history of obligation: the domination of the single action of the alien person, from the position of the slaves through all steps and forms of serfdom to the modern total worker (*ibid.*, p. 605).

Here, Cohen somewhat overstates his case; for, as compared with slavery, domination of the person under capitalism takes on a more subtle form. This domination develops not through the ownership of the person, as in the slave society, but through control over the labor power of the worker, as established in the labor contract. However, this also is Cohen's meaning; for he states that what characterizes domination is that it "isolates" the action of the worker and thus "irresistibly tears apart the total person, the unity of the person as such" (*ibid.*). That is to say, autonomous action, or the possibility thereof, is largely limited to the private realm and surrendered in the socioeconomic realm; the person is split into two, as it were, in that he is master some of the time but servant most of the time.

Under capitalism we see not only depersonification of subjects but also a personification of objects. Cohen provides two examples. The first is the "illusion of the personification of capital" as embedded in the idea that capital as such creates interest—that is, the illusion that "capital itself becomes a worker, it labors, as the worker does; it creates values and, hence, objects" (*ibid.*, p. 609). Cohen does not tell us what the ideological significance is of this

illusion, but one such purpose can be easily discerned: the illusion covers up the exploitation of the worker and thus helps to justify "rewards" for capital ownership. The personification of capital, however, is not merely an illusion; it reflects the fact that capital accumulation is a force determining human behavior. The humane capitalist, for example, cannot become too humane without ceasing to be a capitalist; after all, he must defend his position on the market. The second example concerns the idea that one can live forever, as it were, through one's property estate. Cohen states with regard to descent: "Here arises the appearance as if the person through his will . . . can win and eternalize the object; hence, the illusion that the object can become the symbol of the person and lose its own value" (*ibid.*, p. 606; cf. p. 614). We may add that this illusion is an aspect of a more encompassing illusion, namely, that the value of a thing is seen not as determined by its intrinsic properties but as formed by one's ownership of the object. Ownership becomes a precondition for the enjoyment of the object and tends to overshadow it. Also, within capitalist society the worth of the person tends to be equated with the market value of his possessions, and that which is not privately owned is often dealt with in a callous manner. As noted previously, one purpose of the cooperative and the limitation of property to personal property, i.e., property in use, is to overcome this distorted relation between person and object, this obsession with property, which even extends beyond the individual's lifetime. For Cohen, not ownership, but morality is the mark of eternity.

Cohen states with a touch of irony that the "isolation of action" is the "meaning of the famous blessing of the division of labor" (*ibid.*, p. 607). His claim is elucidated in the work of Marx: the isolation of action—that is, forced heteronomy or domination in the workplace—develops under capitalism through the division of labor. And, recently, the issue has been argued by Harry Braverman in *Labor and Monopoly Capital*. Braverman shows that modern management techniques, as initiated by Frederick Taylor, were designed not only to maximize profits, but also to effectively control the worker and possible actions of protest. These techniques seek to make the worker an "animated tool of management," and, Braverman maintains, their practical effects have been a division of labor to the highest pitch, as well as a degradation or "de-skilling" of labor.³⁹

This (increasing) separation of manual and intellectual labor highlights the fact that most people lack autonomy and responsibility within capitalist private enterprise; only a few people de-

sign and control the production process. Yet there are situations in which we must ascribe responsibility to the corporation in its totality. Consider, for example, the recent successful Nestlé boycott. The reason for this boycott was that the Nestlé Company's misleading advertisements and promotions of infant formula in Third World countries led to the illness and death of many infants. An effective boycott implies a cutback in production, forcing the company to change its policies. The target of such a boycott is the company as a legal and moral person, not its stockholders as such, nor its management or production workers.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, a boycott has repercussions for each of these groups; notably, a cutback may lead to layoff of production workers. Clearly, the production workers at the Nestlé Company were not responsible for the implementation of its immoral policy, and, considering the employment record of capitalist society, it would not even be fair to say that they were responsible in the very minimal sense of having the choice of working for another company. The threat of unemployment has always been an effective instrument of control over workers. However, once a boycott takes place, we are forced to act as if the workers were responsible for the policy of their company. Or, to put it otherwise, we make them in effect liable for actions for which they are not responsible.

My purpose in articulating this dilemma is not to argue that boycotts against corporations with blatantly immoral policies are wrong. To be sure, this dilemma should concern us, but is outweighed by the importance of changing immoral policies. Besides, there is, of course, the possibility of offering the workers of the targeted company various forms of support. Rather, my purpose is to show that there is an inconsistency between our treatment of corporations as moral and legal persons and the fact that most of the people who make up the corporation lack a voice in determining its management. Another example of the dilemma and inconsistency is filing suit for damage caused by faulty products. A successful suit on a large enough scale may have the greatest negative effects on precisely those who are least responsible, the workers. Cohen presents a clear solution for such capitalist moral irrationalities: the transformation of the corporation into the cooperative.⁴¹

These observations point to various other harms and evils caused by capitalism. Maximization of profit as the prime responsibility of the top of the corporate hierarchy often endangers human life, as the Nestlé case illustrates, not to mention safety and health in the workplace, and leads to faulty goods (long testing

may prevent the conquest of a great share of the market). Moreover, this maximization at least partly explains planned obsolescence and ecological damage to the environment, as well as the increasing militarization of industrial production. These are, however, all familiar objections and problems, and they need not be discussed here in any detail.⁴² At any rate, they are not explicitly mentioned in Cohen's work. What his work offers instead is an important conceptual framework for analyzing and eventually solving such problems. To see this point, we must turn briefly to Cohen's contention that both science and ethics must be guided by one and the same law—the "basic principle of truth."

Cohen argues that both science and ethics are idealizing activities. The scientist searches for the ideal mathematical description of his object; the ethicist tries to find the ideal moral subject; they both engage in the task of bridging the gap between "data" and ideal. The gap sets an "ought," the "ought" of the infinite progress of science or morality.⁴³ The most significant link between science and ethics, however, is that both these tasks must be seen as aspects of one basic task—the search for truth. Cohen states: "Epistemic logic [and, hence, science] alone does not offer truth. But also ethics alone cannot give truth. Truth must be sought in the connection between epistemic logic and ethics." That is, "[t]ruth means the correlation and harmony of theoretical and practical problems." This is "the basic principle of truth" (*Pure Will*, p. 89). Cohen further explicates this principle in the following passage:

The highest fundamental law is the law of truth. Truth alone is the law of the necessary connection between the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of morality. This truth is more than exactness, more than finality. Truth is the accord of theoretical causality with ethical teleology. This accord of both kinds of lawfulness has been from of old the philosopher's stone (*Religion of Reason*, p. 410).

On Cohen's account, then, a scientific praxis that is not conceived of as moral praxis lacks truth. But, also, moral praxis must be seen as scientific praxis. In either case, the impetus behind one's activities must be "truthfulness"—that is, the commitment to seek to unite natural and moral laws.

Accordingly, Cohen condemns the division of labor under capitalism as leading to a destruction of the "unity of culture" (*Pure Will*, p. 607). One aspect of this destruction is a separation between "intellectual culture" (science) and "moral culture," the former the prerogative of the few, the latter the duty of all. Cohen replies:

It cannot be said that not all human beings must have science as their vocation, while they all must opt for morality. The vocation of morality cannot be fulfilled except on the basis of scientific insight. Just as all human beings must have morality as their vocation, so they are all called upon to become concerned with science (*ibid.*, p. 506).

Likewise, Cohen rejects the separation between "material culture" (the production of economic goods) and intellectual culture. After noting that the division of labor under capitalism has led to a situation in which some people are forced to spend their life behind machines, whereas others can attend to intellectual (scientific) labor, Cohen states: "This distinction must end. All human beings must at the same time participate in scientific labor" (*ibid.*, p. 507).

To come back to my earlier contention that capitalist industrial production leads to such harms and evils as faulty and dangerous goods, environmental destruction, and an endless stream of weapons, the general issue at stake can now be rephrased and further explicated: capitalist industrial production lacks truth; its *telos* is not to unite natural and moral laws, but to accumulate capital. Most people within capitalist private enterprise are not in a position to be "truthful," and those who can be "truthful" are guided by a different imperative. The result is that we can at best attempt to morally influence capitalist industrial production "from the outside" and "after the fact." In a recent study on Cohen's practical philosophy, Henning Günther forcefully expresses the Cohenian alternative, as well as the need for this alternative:

Critique is not exercised with respect to the products of the productivity of the modern world, but rather with respect to the manner of its production. Critique must guide each step of the production. One can no longer think of ethics and politics as able to limit the productivity of the sciences from the outside; rather, each execution of a thought must become critical. Ethics must become immanent to productivity, for otherwise the modern world will destroy itself (*Philosophie des Fortschritts*, p. 59).

And, to complete this picture, it is to be noted that, on Cohen's account, such immanent moral critique (scientific praxis as moral praxis, and vice versa) is possible only if capitalist enterprise is changed into the cooperative, which we may now further specify as a community of colegislative scientific producers.

Finally, it should be observed that Cohen's remarks on the "basic principle of truth" and its critical significance underline two of his arguments discussed earlier. The first is his contention that

moral education must be an aspect of public education. The point is obvious: Cohen holds that public education must teach "truthfulness," and this means that scientific and moral education must go hand in hand (see *Pure Will*, p. 517). The soundness of this view seems hard to deny in an age in which the scientific destruction of humanity poses an increasing threat. The second argument is that the ideal state and capitalism are antithetical. For Cohen the state must also seek to unite causal and moral laws, and this presupposes informed citizens who are familiar with both the natural sciences and the various social sciences. Capitalism, however, tends to lead to intellectual deprivation and to separation of the different cultures. Moreover, it is difficult to see how independent thought, moral responsibility, and decision-making can be eliminated for most people in the socioeconomic realm without having the same effect in the political realm. A system that expects economic production to be settled by "experts" also expects politics to be settled by "experts." Add to this our previous claims that great economic inequality undermines true political democracy and that capitalism by its very nature tends to privatize the public realm; and, to paraphrase Kant, we can (with Cohen) conclude that the ideal of true political democracy is empty without economic democracy; as we will see soon, economic democracy without true political democracy is blind.

Is Cooperative Socialism a Viable Alternative?

Through his critique of capitalist private enterprise, Cohen arrives at the view that high moral demands must be imposed upon the cooperative: it must be a fully democratic institution, and it must abide by an industrial policy of "truth." Considering the Kantian moral ideal, we may assume that this latter claim entails that the industrial policy of the cooperative must not only aim at the satisfaction of the needs of its own members but also seek to contribute to the satisfaction of the needs of *all* human beings. The question that we now confront is whether the cooperative can realize these goals and, hence, can overcome the problems discussed concerning the capitalist economy. This question can be divided into two basic questions that the cooperative socialist society must face. First, what reason do we have to believe that the cooperative will be anything more than an organization led by the class of managers through the fiat of the workers? Second, what reason do we have to hold that the cooperative will not adopt the principle of the maximization of profits, now serving the interest of all members of

the economic company but still not the interest of humanity? Even if no good reasons can be given, there is still a gain made as compared to capitalist private enterprise, but this gain is small, too small, in the light of Cohen's moral ideal.

Braverman succinctly sets forth the first problem and points to its solution as well:

The conception of a democracy in the workplace based simply upon the imposition of a formal structure of parliamentarism—election of directors, the making of production and other decisions by ballot, etc.—upon the existing organization of production is delusory. Without the return of requisite technical knowledge to the mass of workers and the reshaping of the organization of labor—without, in a word, a new and truly collective mode of production—balloting within factories and offices does not alter the fact that the workers remain as dependent as before upon “experts,” and can only choose among them, or vote for alternatives presented by them. Thus genuine workers’ control has as its prerequisite the demystifying of technology and the reorganization of the mode of production (*Labor and Monopoly Capital*, p. 445n.).

Braverman further explains the matter by stating that “[t]he worker can regain mastery over collective and socialized production only by assuming the scientific, design, and operational prerogatives of modern engineering; short of this, there is no mastery over the labor process.” Accordingly, true worker-control socialism presupposes that “the antagonisms in the labor process between controllers and workers, conception and execution, mental and manual labor are overthrown” (*ibid.*, pp. 444 and 445).

Cohen's view essentially accords with Braverman's. To be sure, Cohen does not offer the same details, but we may interpret his statement that the distinction between the different cultures must be overcome and that everyone must come to participate in intellectual or scientific labor as implying that the ideal cooperative worker is both developer and operator of the means of production. Is this possible? Cohen himself, after stating his proposal that we all come to participate in scientific labor, writes: “Perhaps one will say that is utopian idealism. Thus one denies truthfulness. Truthfulness destroys the distinction that Kant has earmarked in the saying, ‘That may be right in theory, but it won't work in practice.’ Therein lies the difference between the despotism of experience and pure morality” (*Pure Will*, pp. 507–08). In other words, on Cohen's account it would be an instance of dogmatic metaphysics to claim on the basis of past experience that most people lack the capacity to become scientific producers. We simply do not know

what the effect will be of the creation of favorable social conditions for the intellectual development of all human beings. Thus the primacy of praxis requires that we operate on the assumption that all individuals can come to participate in scientific labor if favorable conditions prevail—the assumption sets a task. Furthermore, increasing automation lends credibility to the idea of the cooperative as a community of scientific producers. The possible emancipatory effects of automation were already noted by Marx in the *Grundrisse*.⁴⁴

[T]o the degree that large industry develops, the creation of real wealth comes to depend less on labor time and on the amount of labor employed than on the power of the agencies set in motion during labor time, whose 'powerful effectiveness' . . . depends . . . on the general state of science and on the progress of technology. . . . Labor no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself. . . . He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. In this transformation, it is . . . his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body—it is, in a word, the development of the social individual which appears as the great foundation-stone of production and of wealth (pp. 704–05).

Now it may quite well be the case that there are limits to the overcoming of the division of labor and the drudgery that accompanies some forms of manual labor, but then Marx's answer, and we may assume Cohen's, is that there is the possibility of alternating between such tasks. More importantly, as the passage just cited intimates, one aspect of the socialist ideal is that the process of material production (the "realm of necessity") will take up a much smaller part of human life than it presently does, opening up room for the full development of our artistic, philosophical, and scientific capacities (the "realm of freedom").⁴⁵

These last two claims raise the issue of economic efficiency and growth under socialism. From a Kantian point of view, it would be a mistake to argue that socialism must compete, as it were, against capitalism in terms of its notion of efficiency and economic growth—such socialism is an aborted socialism. In a nontechnical sense, this efficiency involves creating the best balance of consumer satisfaction against costs, where costs comprise labor and resources.⁴⁶ Now, provided that consumer satisfaction means the shallow satisfaction portrayed in the endless stream of advertisements, the ceaseless appropriation of goods for entertain-

ment, and provided that we do not count environmental deterioration and dehumanization in the labor process as costs, capitalism may quite well be more efficient than worker-control socialism. Once the concern is socialist efficiency, however, the picture changes completely; for this kind of efficiency views labor dissatisfaction and ecological destruction as great costs, whereas autonomy in the workplace is considered to be a great good. Moreover, both Cohen and Marx see the socialist individual not as a passive consumer but rather as a creative all-round individual for whom artistic and intellectual satisfaction are at least as important, if not more important, than material satisfaction.⁴⁷

The question of economic growth must be approached in similar fashion. We must ask "what kind of growth, and for whom?" Walter A. Weisskopf observes in his *Alienation and Economics*:⁴⁸

The trouble with most economic reasoning about growth is its one-dimensionality. *Economic* scarcity includes only the dimension of intentionally produced goods and services, evaluated in money and mostly for sale to others. . . . Existential scarcity includes much more: everything that human beings may need, want, desire and do, including objectives which cannot be reached by purposeful production. . . . Love, friendship, primary, warm, affectionate human relations; the experience of beauty, worship, the pursuit of truth and of the good, are of this nature (p. 188).

Weisskopf adds that "[t]hese noneconomic needs which cannot be satisfied by more production for the market are *the real costs of economic growth* and of striving for more and more goods and services." In his view this applies to our society, not only because most of our life-activity is spent on economic activity, but also because the corresponding belief is dominant that "whatever has no market value has hardly any value at all."

Weisskopf's alternative conception of growth—multidimensional growth, which includes, besides economic growth, such dimensions as moral, spiritual, communal, and affective growth (see *ibid.*, p. 190)—accords with the view of socialism propounded here, although it needs to be emphasized (pace Weisskopf) that these "noneconomic" dimensions must be incorporated and reflected in the economic process itself, in the kind of goods that are produced and in the manner in which this production takes place. It may be noted, for example, that our present industrial process increasingly creates an environment that blocks some of the "existential" experiences that Weisskopf treasures.⁴⁹ And, of course, from a socialist perspective, but not from a capitalist perspective, a more equal

distribution of both economic and noneconomic goods is in itself a sign of "growth."

Returning to the two basic problems facing the cooperative society which I have posed, we can now see that Cohen offers an adequate answer to the first problem. His moral and political program involves not just economic democracy by ballot but rather a true community of legislators, a community of scientific workers, who seek to develop all their human capacities. In his program the demand for the cooperative goes hand in hand with the demand for the most comprehensive education for all. Thus Cohen's program also meets part of the second basic problem—the question whether the cooperative will not make the well-being of its members the sole motive of its production. But in order to come to a more conclusive assessment of this problem we must address the issue whether the means of production should be in the hands of the cooperative or should be placed with the community at large, i.e., the state.

Although Cohen's notion of the cooperative suggests that the cooperative itself should own the means of production, and this was a common view at the time, the following passage from *Pure Will* points in a different direction. It also indicates that Cohen was aware of the second basic problem facing the cooperative society. After noting the preoccupation with property under capitalism, he writes:

It does not help to relieve the individual of property when the result is only that a relative community of property owners is created. The cooperative forms merely an intermediate stage of the legal person; it must be further developed as a true representative of the state as legal person. Otherwise cooperatives will compete with each other, just as individuals do. It is first within and under the state that property of objects in use ceases to be dangerous for the individual. Property loses its frightening character in the just state (p. 614).

Thus it seems that Cohen held that ownership of the means of production must be placed in the hands of the cooperative state. The gain made by this step is that industrial policy can now be subjected to democratic control by society at large and thus transcend the possible narrow outlook of the members of the cooperative ("economic democracy without true political democracy is blind"). Yet one may wonder whether the cure is not worse than the disease, as is suggested by the fact that collectivized ownership in most present "socialist" countries has led to the very opposite

of worker-control socialism. Cohen's analysis is too general and indefinite to tackle this issue,⁵⁰ and for this reason I will in conclusion turn briefly to a recent response.

A Market Model of Worker-control Socialism

Most current writings on worker-control socialism are based on the premise that a distinction must be drawn between a capitalist economy and a market economy. Lucien Goldmann sets forth a main motive for drawing this distinction in his *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*.⁵¹ After noting that the dominant values of the Enlightenment—formal freedom, legal equality, and toleration—are threatened in existing “socialist” societies, he argues that it has become manifest that “the picture of the world adopted by the Enlightenment should be judged neither totally obsolete nor irrelevant, but that it enshrines values of crucial importance whose preservation is one of the most urgent of the problems facing socialism.” Goldmann continues:

In the socialist society of the future, Marx saw the heritage and continuation of bourgeois humanism. It has now become clear, however, that with the suppression of the market economy, which provides the basis of bourgeois society, the principle values of its humanism are endangered too. Socialist politicians and theorists who wish to remain loyal to the spirit of Marx are thus obliged to answer the question how socialism can transplant these values and realize them in a different form of society (p. 94).

Goldmann, although expressing uncertainty about this form, thinks that the answer might be a social system that seeks “to combine the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production with the maintenance of a market economy”—in a word, market socialism.⁵²

Embedded in Goldmann's observations is the contention that Marx's work points to a command-planning economy. This contention is, to say the least, debatable, not only because we can find passages in Marx's work supporting the case for producer cooperatives, but also because at those points where he speaks of the nationalization of private property and of a rational plan for the socialist economy, it is not at all clear that he had in mind a plan that originates from above (the state) and sets production quotas, prices, wages, etc.⁵³ We may, however, criticize Marx for often equating a market economy as such with the *capitalist* market economy; for this strengthens the impression that a command-

planning economy is the only alternative to the capitalist economy.⁵⁴ Furthermore, Goldmann perhaps establishes too quickly a link between a command-planning economy and the repression of individual liberties and rights. The very fact that in present Soviet-type economies such a repression takes place might be more a question of historical accident than of logical necessity. Nonetheless, it seems fair to say that a command-planning economy carries with it the danger of repression of individual liberties and rights in that it requires an enormous concentration and centralization of power in the state. Two other objections to a command-planning economy are that it severely restricts the scope of decision-making within the workplace; i.e., it is antithetical to worker-control socialism; and that it poses what seems to be an insurmountable problem of providing efficient allocation of economic goods.

Market socialism can take on different forms, depending on such variables as the scope of the market (production goods may be excluded), the organizational structure of the workplace (self-management may not be included), and the precise form of productive property ownership.⁵⁵ It falls outside the scope of this study to discuss the various models of market socialism. But, considering our previous observations and value commitments (the problems of central planning; self-management; and, democratic control of economic policy), the kind of model that David Schweickart expounds in his *Capitalism or Worker Control?* seems most promising. His specific model of market socialism has, in his own words, three basic features: "(1) each productive enterprise is managed democratically by its workers; (2) the economy is essentially a market economy: raw materials and consumer goods are bought and sold at prices determined by the forces of supply and demand; (3) the government controls all new investment: it generates its investment fund by taxation [on capital assets], and dispenses it according to plan" (*ibid.*, pp. 49–50). Schweickart elaborates each of these features along the following lines. Although the workers control the workplace, they do not own their means of production. These are socialized property—the state does not permit productive assets not to be maintained, and, in case the worker-control firm can no longer generate a decent income for its workers, bankruptcy will follow, and the remainder of the firm's capital will return to the investment fund. The economy is still a market economy, but not a capitalist market economy. This is so, not only because the means of production are no longer in private hands, but also because each individual who joins a cooperative firm is a voting member and shares in its profits—i.e., labor power is no

longer a commodity. Furthermore, the investment fund makes it possible to develop a long-term economic policy subject to democratic control. Once a policy is established and approved through legislative channels, individuals, groups, as well as representatives of existing firms make specific economically feasible proposals as to how they think they can realize certain features of the economic plan. Local planning boards approve these proposals. Lastly, Schweickart emphasizes that his form of socialism is a *democratic* socialism, preserving and extending present civil rights and representative government (see *ibid.*, pp. 50 ff. and 150 ff.).

We do not need to go into any more detail of this model of worker-control market socialism to see that it provides *an* adequate answer to the major pitfalls of the capitalist and command-planning economy. (It is best to speak of *an* adequate answer, because we can think of other adequate models than Schweickart's, which share its basic tenets but differ in detail—we may, for example, think of a more direct public input in the worker-control firm through elected officials who help to determine the specific policy of the firm, representing the interest of local communities.⁵⁶ Also—and this accords with the spirit of Schweickart's work—any given model must continually be put into question and refined through socialist theory and praxis.) Unlike the command-planning economy, the worker-control market economy provides an efficient allocation of economic goods and does not require a bureaucracy that curtails the scope of self-management and may pose a threat to human liberties and rights. And, as compared with the capitalist economy, worker-control market socialism realizes autonomy in the workplace and sets a framework conducive to the development of a more rational economy, an economy for human need satisfaction, not for capital accumulation. Some basic reasons for this are: First, public control over new investments leads to investments that reflect public interest. Thus we may hope that new investments will not involve planned obsolescence, environmental destruction, and economic growth that develops at the cost of non-economic values and needs. Second, continuous economic expansion is hardly in the interest of the workers of existing cooperative firms, for it only means that more workers will share the greater net revenues of the firm. (This may seem to create a serious supply/demand problem, but we must not forget that new investments are likely to occur in profitable areas of the economy—see *Capitalism or Worker Control?*, pp. 73 ff.). Accordingly, we may anticipate that worker-control firms will engage in less aggressive selling techniques than capitalist firms, which means, among other

things, that we may hope for fewer wasteful advertisements selling a superficial way of life (cf. *ibid.*, p. 89). And, finally, self-management makes viable the option of choosing less labor and more leisure (cf. *ibid.*, p. 88), which, together with the previous point, lay the foundation for the development of the all-round individual envisaged by Cohen and Marx.

It must be admitted, however, that some of the gains of worker-control market socialism here mentioned are a matter of degree. This type of socialism without moral control is a step forward from capitalism, but a far cry from Cohen's ideal of the cooperative socialist society. Profit maximization per individual is in the interest of the worker under worker-control market socialism, if his interest is a narrow ("material") self-interest. It follows that planned obsolescence, aggressive selling techniques, environmental destruction, etc., may be in his interest. Besides, there are the problems of unemployment; of competition between firms; of local areas with strong and weak economies, leading to intolerable economic inequalities; and of the lack of international solidarity (socialism in developed countries flourishing at the cost of developing countries). Socialized ownership of the means of production and public control over new investments seem to offset this projected negative balance (which is partly rooted in the market system as such); but what if the public at large opts for a policy of the mere maximization of self-interest? And what if the workers opt for democracy by ballot rather than true control over the workplace? Without denying the tremendous importance of historical experiments and new learning processes leading to better socialist economic models, the point simply is that there is no foolproof economic scheme as long as we assume that the other is not at all recognized as a fellow person: the ideal of a harmony of devils leads us nowhere, the human wasteland. A fundamental premise of Kantian socialist ethics is that more favorable economic and political conditions are conducive to the development of the moral disposition. Worker-control market socialism as sketched here presents us with more favorable economic conditions, and Kantian socialist ethics demands that we seek these conditions,⁵⁷ as well as the ideal state and peace between the nations. But it is only when moral improvement has taken place that we may expect worker-control market socialism to become truly a worker-control socialism, that is, Cohen's ideal of cooperative socialism.

CHAPTER VII

Marx and Morality: A Kantian Analysis and Critique

In this concluding chapter I aim to show that certain basic shortcomings in Marx's social theory can be corrected by making Kantian socialist ethics its moral foundation. The tenability of this enterprise is underlined by the fact that there are various evaluative similarities between Kantian socialist ethics and Marx's social theory. I will discuss these similarities in the first section below, concluding that Kantian socialist ethics can strengthen the Marxian socialist evaluative perspective, both in foundational terms and in terms of detailed content. In the second section I will turn to Marx's contention that such a perspective does not have an important role to play in bringing about the ideal society. Marx's failure to explore praxis as *moral* praxis is rooted in his materialist conception of history, which is, in turn, based on Hegel's understanding of history as the unfolding of reason. I will argue that Marx's Hegelian view of morality and historical progress involves an uncritical legitimization of revolutionary violence and lends itself to repressive ideological purposes, justifying past and future crimes against humanity. I will here also discuss Cohen's criticisms of Marx. In the third section I will point out that the Hegelian framework in Marx is offset by a more Kantian orientation toward the idea of historical progress and its relevance for social action. After reconstructing and further exploring the Kantian elements in

Marx, I will offer in the fourth section my final conclusion that the socialist cause is served by taking seriously the moral program of Kantian socialist ethics.

Before starting this project, however, let me say a few words about its rationale and limitations. The choice for a critical dialogue between Kantian socialist ethics and Marxian thought is not solely determined by considerations of theoretical affinities and differences. We can also find such affinities and differences between Kantian socialist ethics and certain currents within the utopian socialist tradition. But despite all its richness and diversity, the history of socialism of the past century has been dominated by Marxism. We will see in the Appendix that it is for this reason that around the turn of the century some neo-Kantian socialists opted for a "Kant-Marx" dialogue: they attempted through their intellectual labor to bring about various morally required changes within socialist thought. More recently, a comparable endeavor to "ethicize" Marxism can, for example, be found in the Frankfurt School (notably, Jürgen Habermas) and in the work of the Yugoslavian *Praxis* group. It falls outside the scope of the present study to examine such recent attempts to morally transform Marxism, but it is my hope that my Kantian analysis and critique of Marx constitutes a contribution to these ongoing efforts.

1. Kantian Socialist Ethics and Marx: Evaluative Similarities and Differences

There are three basic evaluative affinities between Kantian socialist ethics and Marx's view: the primacy of praxis; a condemnation of capitalism as an economic system of domination, blocking the development of human autonomy or self-determination; and a vision of the ideal society as a cooperative society, overcoming the division of labor and promoting the all-round individual. These similarities point to corresponding differences. I will discuss them in the order presented.

The Primacy of Praxis

The primacy of praxis in Marx is manifest in the famous Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it" (*The German Ideology*, p. 617). Of course, Marx's claim here is not that we must cease interpreting the world—as if he were pleading for a mindless activ-

ism—but that our interpretation of the world and our action in the world must be guided by the socialist/communist ideal. (I will later touch upon the distinction that Marx draws between socialism and communism.) Like Kant, then, and in opposition to Hegel in particular, Marx holds that the ultimate purpose of philosophy is not merely to contemplate the world but to guide the struggle for a world in which contemplation is only one of our sources of satisfaction. In short, the mere metaphysical understanding of the world must be replaced by a praxis-oriented philosophy. Undoubtedly, Marx had too high an expectation of such a philosophy in his early work. In “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, Introduction,” he postulates the schema that “[j]ust as philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *intellectual* weapons in philosophy; and once the lightning of thought has struck deeply into this virgin soul of the people, emancipation will transform the *Germans* into *men*” (*Early Writings*, p. 257). In other words, critical philosophy will change the Germans from servants of the king into truly human beings for whom (emancipated) “man [is] the supreme being for man” (*ibid.*).

As the last statement indicates, Marx’s critique is directed not only against traditional philosophy but also against religion. Holding that “[t]o be radical is to grasp things by the root” and that “for man the root is man himself,” he argues that “[t]he foundation of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion*, religion does not make man” (*ibid.*, pp. 251 and 244). The religious person has an inverted vision of the world in that he views the true world as the world beyond and in that he projects his own essence upon a divine being, without recognizing that these illusions are his own creations. Thus he devalues himself, just as he does by worshipping the modern gods of capitalism, commodities, and money.¹ But, Marx continues to argue, religious longing and alienation reflect the demand for real happiness in a world of suffering, which means that religion is “a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions” (*ibid.*, p. 244). This sets the purpose of the critique of religion:

Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear the chain without fantasy or consolation but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower. The criticism of religion disillusiones man, so that he will think, act and fashion his reality like a man who has discarded his illusions and regained his

senses, so that he will move around himself as his own true sun. Religion is only the illusory sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself (*ibid.*).

Marx's alternative for religion, then, is praxis toward the social ideal, seeking to replace the heavenly flower by the real flower, the earthly flower.

Now it may seem that this particular application of the primacy of praxis shows the inadequacy of the Kantian notion and its ramifications, but this is not so. We have seen that Marx is mistaken in maintaining that the concept of the highest good in Kant's practical philosophy functions as a heavenly flower, making tolerable an intolerable and seemingly unchangeable social situation. Moreover, the type of Copernican revolution that Marx seeks is actually accomplished in the work of Kant, as well as in the practical system of Cohen, not by discarding religion altogether, as Marx does, but by making the human person and his moral ideal the center of religion, by transforming a religion of contemplation and even resignation into a religion of moral praxis and human emancipation, a practical religion. For Kant the demand to seek the moral community of legislators—the kingdom of God on earth—constitutes the rational-ethical core of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and Cohen adds to this that socialism is anticipated in this tradition.² I have little doubt that this ethicization of religion is practically more fruitful than Marx's mere negation of religion, but what is more important to note in the present context is that Kant's and Cohen's analysis is philosophically more subtle and adequate as well.

This is not to say that Marx is misguided in claiming that religion is an ideational human creation which may function as the "opium of the people." However, what is lacking in his analysis is a *philosophically explicated* yardstick for distinguishing between illusory and nonillusory ideas. Here the Kantian analysis provides an answer. Both Kant and Cohen, no less than Marx, view religion as an ideational human creation, but they argue that we should admit to the practical system precisely those practical religious ideas which accord with the primacy of praxis and its methodological corollary. Thus Kant argues that we must postulate God for the sake of the belief in the practicability of the moral ideal in the natural world, and Cohen makes a similar claim in maintaining that God is the "guarantee" of the possibility of "truth."³ It might be objected, as I have done with regard to Kant, that these ideas have more content than the critical philosophy permits, but

the main point remains: we must make some assumption to the same effect in order *not* to conclude that socialism is an illusionary practical idea; after all, the very possibility of the historical realization of this idea is a cognitively open question. Admittedly, there is an alternative "solution": the socialist idea is not a possibility but rather an inevitable "reality" unfolding in the historical process itself. We will later see that Marx, in effect, opts for this "solution" by developing his materialist conception of history as one that describes the "immanent" and "natural" laws of history as leading to the communist ideal. From the perspective of the critical philosophy and the reflective judgment, this conception of history is a dogmatic (metaphysical) and, hence, illusionary idea. This conception also promotes an attitude of acquiescence, violating the primacy of praxis, and thus it may fulfill the same function of resignation that Marx ascribed to religion. We may conclude, then, that the merit of Marx's analysis of religion, despite its too generalizing character, must be sought in its social aspect rather than in its philosophical dimension, in that it unmasks the repressive role that is often played by religion in capitalist society.

This points to a more general conclusion: social analysis is the strength of Marx's work, not only in terms of actual results but also—and this is much more important in the long run—in virtue of the direction that it sets for social research. The weakness of his work occurs in the moral and philosophical underpinning of its social analysis. The similarity of the primacy of praxis suggests this conclusion. It is strongly affirmed by the second evaluative similarity between Kantian socialist ethics and Marx's thought.

Alienation, Heteronomy, and Exploitation

The second affinity is that capitalism is condemned primarily as a system of servitude, only secondarily as a system of economic injustice. As Eugene Kamenka rightly states in *The Ethical Foundations of Marxism*, Marx "came to Communism in the interests of freedom, not of security."⁴

The claim that we must overthrow conditions of servitude, such as the capitalist society, is a common thread in Marx's early work. In "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction," he writes:

The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that *for man the supreme being is man*, and thus with the *categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a debased, enslaved, neglected and contemptible being*—conditions that are best described in the exclamation of a French-

man on the occasion of a proposed tax on dogs: Poor dogs! They want to treat you like human beings! (p. 251)⁵

The common denominator that Marx ascribes to conditions of servitude is that they are conditions in which human self-determination (freedom) cannot be realized. The self here is explicated in terms of our "species nature." This nature is seen as a set of characteristics that distinguishes us from nonrational animals. Thus Marx's notion of species nature (being) correlates with one aspect of Kant's notion of humanity.⁶ Yet, there is this essential difference: whereas Marx stresses spontaneous communal activity and cooperation, as well as creative labor, as the crucial aspects of our true being, Kant emphasizes our capacity to act on principle, i.e., our autonomy.

Just as autonomy and heteronomy are opposite terms, self-determination, i.e., the realization of one's species nature, and alienation are opposite terms. Accordingly, Marx develops his condemnation of capitalism as a system of servitude in terms of alienation, contrasting this society with the communist society, in which human alienation is overcome. It is difficult to detect a common core or meaning in the wide variety of processes and activities that Marx in his early writings describes as "alienated" in capitalism, but Kant's notion of heteronomy gives a clue. An *alienated* process or activity is one that is not determined by one's own law—for Marx this law is one's species nature—; rather, it is a process or activity shaped by an alien law. Marx sets forth this alien law in terms of egoism, economic competition, religious projection, political domination, and production for commodities,⁷ whereas in Kant's notion of heteronomy the alien law is the law of the inclinations. But this difference is less significant than it may appear at first sight, for, as his historical writings in particular make clear, Kant views the conflict between moral reason and the inclinations not merely as an internal conflict but also, and primarily, as an interpersonal conflict.⁸ He describes the unjust state and war as heteronomous conditions, in that their law is not the moral law but the law of competition, repression, anarchy, and the lust for power, reflecting the unsocial sociability of human beings. And Cohen extends this analysis to the economic realm.

There is no break between Marx's early and later writings, but rather a gradually growing conviction that capital accumulation is the alien law that is the root and final determinant of all alienated processes and activities under capitalism. (His development of the materialist conception of history corresponds to this gradual

change, for we can already find the notion of history as a dialectical process in his early writings.) Thus the theory of alienation is further explicated and narrowed down to a theory of exploitation in the economic realm. Marx's labor theory of value, in conjunction with his labor theory of surplus value, seeks to lay bare the mechanisms of this exploitation. To put the matter briefly, the worker creates surplus value—that is, the value of his products minus the value of his labor power; unpaid labor equals surplus value—and this leads to capital accumulation. Such accumulation, in turn, results in control over the worker; for the capitalist as owner of the means of production determines the terms of the labor contract, the conditions of production, the kind of commodities that will be produced, etc. Moreover, Marx argues that economic power leads to political power and cultural domination. His well-known thesis that the rate of surplus value equals the rate of exploitation is, therefore, to be understood as saying that the rate of surplus value equals the rate of domination or servitude.

Some recent critics of Marx think instead that the main (or even sole) purpose of his exploitation theory as based on his labor theory of (surplus) value is to expose economic injustice under capitalism. Their assumption is that exploitation is to be defined as unjust appropriation of that which belongs to the worker—his product or its value. Once this position is adopted, Marx's exploitation theory is to be dismissed (as one critic does not fail to point out)⁹; for its thesis that the rate of surplus value equals the rate of exploitation implies that a society free of exploitation is one in which the worker receives *all* the value of his products, which means that there is no right of society to make deductions from this value for health insurance, public education, future investment, insurance for the disabled, etc. This conflicts with Marx's view. Significantly enough, in *Critique of the Gotha Program*, he himself censured the authors of the party program (of the German socialists, adopted in May 1875, at Gotha) for making this error of holding that the total product belongs to the worker. In response to their demand that the worker have the right to the "undiminished proceeds" of his labor, Marx argued that, in the socialist society, as the society that forms the bridge between capitalism and communism, deductions like those mentioned must be made (see *ibid.*, p. 344). (It will soon become clear that Marx held that such deductions become superfluous in the final social ideal, the communist society, partly because of increased productivity and partly because of greater spontaneous cooperation among individuals.)

There are two other reasons for believing that Marx never intended his exploitation theory to have the primary function of revealing economic injustice under capitalism. First, throughout his later work he castigates those socialists who focus on unequal distribution as the moral watershed of capitalism, arguing that distribution is derivative from production. Marx repeats this view in *Critique of the Gotha Program*:

The distribution of the means of consumption at any given time is merely a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves . . . If the material conditions of production were the cooperative property of the workers themselves a different distribution of the means of consumption from that of today would follow of its own accord. Vulgar socialists . . . have followed the bourgeois economists in their consideration and treatment of distribution as something independent of the mode of production and hence in the presentation of socialism as primarily revolving around the question of distribution (p. 348).

And, in a direct attack on the authors of the *Program*, Marx concludes: "Why go back a step when the real state of affairs has been laid bare?" (*ibid.*). Second, Marx views the concern with economic justice as a typical bourgeois preoccupation—money and commodities as the modern gods. For Marx the real issue is self-determination, not the free and equal flow of consumer products, the "socialist" cornucopia. An increase in the production of economic goods is not an end in itself, but rather a mere means for the realization of our true being or species nature.

We can also find in the recent literature on Marx the opposite mistake of the one above: Marx viewed capitalist exploitation only as a form of servitude, not at all as a form of economic injustice.¹⁰ To briefly assess this contention, we must further examine Marx's rebuttal of the claim of the authors of the *Gotha Program* that the worker has the right to the total product of his labor. Although Marx holds that their concern with economic justice reflects a bourgeois orientation toward socialism, he concedes that in the intermediate socialist society a principle of economic justice will be operative which is a modification of their principle of distributive justice: the worker will be rewarded according to the amount of labor he invests, after deductions are made for the well-being of society as a whole. But Marx can consistently make this concession, for he emphasizes with regard to the socialist society that "[i]n every respect, economically, morally, intellectually, it is . . . still stamped with the birth-marks of the old society from

whose womb it has emerged" (*ibid.*, p. 346). What Marx sees as bourgeois about the socialist principle of economic justice, or right, as he puts it, is that this right, like all bourgeois rights, presents us with an equal standard that leads in effect to inequality. (Marx adds that in the socialist society "principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads," thereby rightly suggesting that under capitalism rights often remain mere principles for the vast majority of people.) The socialist principle leads to inequality because there are biological and social differences between human beings: some workers must take care of a family, others not; some workers are able to do more labor than others in the same period of time, etc. In short, the formal principle cannot do justice to the "particular side" of the individual worker. Holding that this is characteristic for rights as such, Marx envisions a society beyond rights, the communist society:

In a more advanced phase of communist society, when the enslaving subjugation of individuals to the division of labor, and thereby the antithesis between intellectual and physical labor, have disappeared; when labor is no longer just a means of keeping alive but has itself become a vital need; when the all-round development of individuals has also increased their productive powers and all the springs of cooperative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can society wholly cross the narrow horizon of bourgeois right and inscribe on its banner: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs! (*ibid.*, p. 347).

Thus the communist society does not inscribe a principle of economic justice on its banner (as is often thought). Rather, Louis Blanc's formula is used by Marx as the former meant it to be understood, namely to express the view that the communist society as the ideal society is a brotherhood of humans, each individual promoting the ends of others, not out of a sense of duty, or on the basis of some principle, but spontaneously.¹¹

That Marx saw capitalist exploitation also as a form of economic injustice is affirmed by the fact that he uses terms such as 'robbery', 'embezzlement', and 'theft' in reference to the appropriation of surplus value under capitalism. The socialist principle of economic justice can account for this fact. As Ziyad I. Husami argues in "Marx on Distributive Justice," for Marx the worker is treated unfairly under capitalism because "his reward . . . is not proportional to the *labor* he supplies [as in the socialist society] but, at best, to the value of his *labor power* (a lesser quantity)."¹² Two critical notes, however, must be added to this argument. First, the socialist principle of economic justice clearly establishes that

the worker is economically exploited under capitalism, in particular if we take into account that many deductions under capitalism benefit the capitalists rather than the vast majority of workers. But, contra Husami, it must be said that Marx's exploitation theory as rooted in his labor theory of (surplus) value is not really needed to make this point, since we may simply observe that wages (and in general the distribution of economic goods) under capitalism do not correspond to labor contribution. Second, the socialist principle of economic justice is external to Marx's exploitation theory. It may seem to be the normative equivalent of the basic premise of this theory that value is "congealed labor time," but, strictly speaking, this premise says that the value of a product is determined by the *socially necessary* labor time to produce it, and this means that there is no one-to-one correlation between the value of a product and the amount of labor that an individual laborer has invested at a given time to create it.¹³ The socialist principle of economic justice seems instead to be based on a Lockean labor theory of *property*, modified and applied to socialism by Proudhon and Lassalle.¹⁴

All in all, then, we should not give too much meaning to Marx's socialist principle of economic justice. Its significance is that it offers a normative ground for the fact that Marx at times condemns capitalist exploitation in unmistakably distributive terms. Yet, it is less than certain that it is precisely this principle that guided Marx's critique of capitalism as economically unjust; for the principle receives little attention in his work, and capitalism as he described it, for example in *Capital*, seems to be unfair in terms of various other conceptions of economic justice as well. Thus we may speculate that Marx mentioned the principle as a concession to the at the time powerful Proudhonian and Lassallian factions within the socialist movement at large, using the occasion of the *Gotha Program* for correcting their claim that the worker has the right to the total product of his labor or the monetary equivalent thereof. At any rate, Marx's exploitation theory seeks to reveal not so much that capitalism is economically unjust as that the seemingly reasonable mechanism of selling one's labor power is in fact a mechanism for increasing "enslavement." And, as Marx's call for a society beyond justice underlines, he condemned capitalist exploitation foremost as a system of servitude, and only derivatively as a form of economic injustice. Accordingly, what makes socialism, and in particular communism, superior to capitalism is their characteristic of self-determination. Collective control over the surplus product of society means that exploitation is basically overcome. Once this control is established, the issue of distribution

will become manageable or even will cease to exist as a consideration. For Marx the preoccupation with economic justice in virtually all hitherto existing societies mirrors their nonsocialized mode of production. And he extended this indictment to the concern with rights as such.

We can now return to further exploration of the evaluative similarity between Marx and Kantian socialist ethics with respect to their critique of capitalism. Cohen shares Marx's view that what is basically wrong with capitalism is that it cannot satisfy the conditions of autonomy: the labor contract is a contract of domination, and great economic inequality undercuts the possibility of universal autonomy. And, like Marx, Cohen hopes for a future society in which the human obsession with property, whether personal property or ownership of the means of production, has become a nightmare of the past. Contrary to Marx, however, Cohen does not offer in an explicit manner a principle of economic justice that can be used to condemn capitalism and guide the construction of the new society. Yet, the demand for universal autonomy functions indirectly as such, for it implies that all economic surplus must be used to create the material, social, and political conditions that make possible a moral existence for all human beings. Certainly, our present world is one in which the majority of human beings live under conditions antithetical to even minimal conditions of autonomy: inadequate food consumption if not outright starvation, poor health conditions, illiteracy, etc. So capitalism can be condemned as unjust from a Kantian perspective in that it follows the law of capital accumulation as the dominant determinant of its distribution of economic goods instead of following the law of universal autonomy. Also, this very same demand for universal autonomy can settle the distributive question in the new society. Moreover, Kantian socialist ethics adds to this the moral injunction that human agents ought mutually to promote their personal ends. For Cohen, then, the cooperative society is superior to capitalism in that it is a society in which legislators decide their own affairs in a totally democratic setting, while they all enjoy adequate material conditions. But for Cohen, as for Marx, the former aspect is central, both in the critique of capitalism and in the vision of the ideal.¹⁵

This similarity between Kantian socialist ethics and Marx's view must, however, not blind us to their specific differences on the same evaluative level. Autonomy as the central value of the Kantian socialist individual cannot without important qualifications be equated with Marx's notion of self-determination, because

the latter notion is much more comprehensive, including such elements as spontaneous cooperation, creative labor, artistic fulfillment, and intellectual activity. We may hesitate to adopt such a rich and detailed notion of what it means to be truly human, preferring Kant's minimal and more liberal notion of human happiness, as it is conditioned by the notion of autonomy.¹⁶ Cohen's view in this regard is closer to Marx's, sharing his vision of the all-round individual, but, contrary to Marx, Cohen proceeds in a cautious and direct manner, arguing that the idea of the all-round individual sets a moral task arising from the demand for autonomy. Such an argument and yardstick is lacking in Marx's work, and herein lies a major difficulty with his view.

Marx's evaluative conception of human nature in his early writings is not based on any philosophical defense, and so the question arises of what the ground is for his claim that the communist individual will opt for the values embedded in this conception. Marx's later work provides an answer which is foreshadowed in his early writings: it is the socialized mode of production that will bring about this change. A more limited conception of human nature is now adopted. It is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It is also thoroughly historical in its ramifications, which cannot be said of the earlier prescriptive conception. The new conception is the anthropological correlate of the materialist conception of history, and it holds that what characterizes human beings is that they change their consciousness, needs, and social relations by changing the manner in which they satisfy their material needs.¹⁷ In other words, what is distinctive about human beings is that their need patterns vary with the mode of production. Hitherto all modes of production have been defective in nature, consisting of antagonistic production relations which sooner or later block the further development of the productive forces. The result is that human consciousness and needs have been antagonistic and distorted as well—for example, possessive individualism is the product of a capitalist mode of production. (To complete the picture, it must be noted that differentiation of need patterns within a given mode of production is explained on the basis of social class, but this issue is not important for our present concern.) Thus the logical outcome of Marx's mature theory is that the socialized mode of production will lead to an undistorted and harmonious need pattern, the communist need pattern, and, as his descriptions of the communist society show, this need pattern is essentially the same as the realization of our species nature. The abolition of exploitation, or capital accumulation, as the alien law that is the root of all

other alien laws, then, is the most basic reason why the communist individual will opt for the realization of the truly human capacities. Accordingly, Marx states in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that "the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property" (*The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 484)." Marx's sketch, in *Critique of the Gotha Program*, of the transition period between capitalism and full communism points in the same direction: the main tenet of his prediction is that the socialized mode of production will lead to increased productivity, a gradual overcoming of the division of labor, greater work satisfaction, and thus eventually to spontaneous cooperation and other elements of the realization of the communist individual.

My discussion in the previous chapter of worker-control market socialism has shown that such economistic predictions and expectations are misguided: the socialization of the mode of production is not in itself a *sufficient* ground for holding that human agents will opt for the values of the communist individual. (It is to some extent a necessary ground, since there are material prerequisites for the realization of norms; but this is a different claim.) This is so even if we take into account other economic factors that Marx mentions as preconditions for full communism, such as increased productivity, the gradual elimination of the division of labor, and a socialized mode of production on a world-wide scale. This means that there is a gap in Marx's analysis: he offers no adequate account of how workers will come to accept his value orientation.¹⁸ Kantian socialist ethics provides a solution; for it offers a normative theory which argues that informed and rational agents opt for values similar to the communist ones. Now there is no certainty that human beings will ever take on the moral task embedded in these values, but it is rational to hope that this will happen once there are suitable empirical conditions for making this task tenable and various impediments to the free exercise of practical reason are eliminated. This is what the socialized mode of production accomplishes, although we must—contra Marx—stress not only the impact of more favorable economic circumstances but also the impact of improved political conditions. Regulatively speaking, then, Kantian socialist ethics fills the gap in Marx's analysis—to the extent that it shares his value orientation—and so again we can see that the Marxian analysis stands to gain from this moral theory.

Marx's sketch of how workers will come to adopt communist values has negative ramifications for present social action. The problem is that he fails to draw the subtle but crucial distinction

between saying that improved social situations will lead directly to moral improvement and claiming that improved social conditions remove obstacles to moral improvement. The former view, which seems to be Marx's, not only is inconsistent with the idea of self-determination or autonomy, for it signifies social or economic determinism, but will also lead to despair when it turns out that human beings fail to make the great step forward under certain improved social conditions. And, sad to say, historically, the response has been not only despair and a corresponding turning away from praxis, but also sheer repression to force the great step forward. Kantian socialist ethics avoids these pitfalls, for it holds unambiguously that improved social conditions facilitate the moral task, not that they make this task inevitably successful, effortless, or even superfluous. We may add here that Marx's failure to draw or recognize the above distinction sheds light upon another facet of his thought, namely his view that we do not really have the moral right to blame individual capitalists for their economic crimes because they are conditioned by their historical circumstances.¹⁹ And, quite consistently, Marx also seems to have held that the state within capitalism has no moral right to punish because crime is caused by a faulty economic system.²⁰ Kantian socialist ethics, to the contrary, with its view of the interaction between individual and social change, leaves room for moral responsibility, and, hence, the moral right to punish, although, certainly, it does recognize and stress that social conditions play a very important role here. Thus Kantian socialist ethics encourages social action that aims at reformative changes in the present legal system—without losing sight of the possibility of a punishment-free society—whereas Marx's critique seems to lead to the wrong-headed conclusion that any such action is meaningless.

The Ideal Society

While analyzing the second similarity I have already dealt to some extent with the third similarity between Kantian socialist ethics and Marx's view, namely, their shared vision of the ideal society. But, of course, this is not surprising, because the shared critique of capitalism is rooted in such a vision. In recapitulation, both Cohen and Marx sketch the ideal society as one in which the means of production are socialized, in which the division of labor is overcome as a step toward the all-round individual, and in which questions of ownership and distribution have been replaced by mutual support and true enjoyment of the fruits of labor.

A closer look, however, reveals some important differences between their respective views. Cohen sees the reconciliation between individuals and between (inner) nature and morality as setting an infinite task, whereas Marx seems to have held the dream that under certain economic circumstances social problems as well as individual dilemmas will cease to exist. Thus Marx comes to dream of a society beyond rights—a dream that we cannot find in Cohen's work, and for good reasons. One reason is that, although Marx's critique is to the point that rights in capitalist society remain "formal" for many people, the alternative is not to discard rights. The danger of this is that the importance of rights—both for and in the struggle for the socialist/communist ideal—is neglected, as it has been by too many socialists, with dire consequences. The alternative policy is to seek the effective implementation of many of the "bourgeois" rights and the conditions that make this possible. As Cohen's work makes clear, socialism is not the negation of the "rights of man," but rather its logical outcome. Another reason to reject Marx's view is that, even if we assume that all human beings obey the moral law and are of good will, social problems and individual dilemmas remain, making necessary the idea of rights. For one thing, even in the ideal society economic scarcity and ecological limitations will continue to pose tensions between the rights of present and future generations; for another thing, in this society large institutions will still create inadvertent negative consequences for their members, which can be directly rectified only when individuals are aware of their rights and exercise them.²¹ Nonetheless, we may expect that in the ideal society there will be many fewer occasions in which people need to stand on their rights than there are presently. But also in this respect the Kantian ideal seems more promising than the Marxian: legislators who exercise moral self-constraint are less likely to harm others through paternalistic behavior than communist individuals who are guided by spontaneous brotherly love.

Marx's dream of a society beyond rights (or justice) and beyond a sense of duty is related to another dream in which the allocation of goods no longer takes place through market mechanisms, while at the same time the political and legal state withers away.²² Cohen is, of course, highly critical of this view, arguing that "[t]here is no freedom without law, and no free personality without a community rooted in law" ("Critical Epilogue," pp. 294–95). What deserves special attention here, however, is that Marx's dreams signify that it makes little sense to see his synoptic descriptions of the communist society as a blueprint for a possible future society—in this regard his work offers some valuable but often

conflicting suggestions²³—; rather, their relevance lies primarily in the fact that they display the values that guide his critique of capitalism and his work in general. Also, and this is even more crucial, what these dreams show is that the conclusion of his value orientation is not simply that laws forced upon one's will by an arbitrary will are alien laws but that any law whatsoever, including the moral law, that functions as a corrective of one's desires or interaction with others is an alien law.²⁴ The law of one's species nature is not a *prescriptive* law, but the law of *spontaneous* self-realization and objectification. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Karl Kautsky shared Marx's dreams, and claimed that in the communist society the possibility disappears of human agents being treated as mere means and that "with that goes the necessity of the Kantian Programme for the 'entire future world history.' " It is, quite obviously, at this point that Kantian socialist ethics and the Marxian view definitely part.

2. On the Role of Morality for Social Action (A): The Hegelian Elements in Marx

Thus far I have set forth criticisms of Marx's view that require fine tuning, as it were, of his evaluative perspective; besides that, I have argued that Kantian socialist ethics offers a more adequate underpinning of this perspective than Marx's own philosophy. My final conclusion, however: that Marx saw communist values not as setting an infinite moral task, but rather as the spontaneous expression of communist human nature, intimates a point of disagreement between Marx and Kantian socialist ethics which shows that a fundamental reconstruction of Marx's view is required if it is to become adequate for socialist theory and praxis. This point of disagreement is Marx's contention that the transformative praxis of capitalist society must not be seen as a moral praxis. I will assess this contention in the present section, analyzing Marx's conception of what the subjective mechanisms are that possibly can change capitalism into a better society.

The Materialist Conception of History and the Notion of Practice

At the outset, one would expect that the evaluative perspective in Marx, in conjunction with his critique of capitalism, has a three-fold purpose: to motivate the proletariat to engage in revolutionary

action, eradicating the subjugating conditions of capitalism; to steer this struggle toward the socialist or communist ideal; and to place moral limits or constraints upon the revolutionary struggle—for example, revolutionary action must reflect the ends it seeks to realize. A moment's thought, however, makes clear that Marx could not consistently have had all this in mind, for, as we have seen, it was his belief that the proletariat would opt for his value orientation only after, and on the basis of, the emergence of the socialized mode of production. So what will motivate the proletariat to change society? And what reason do we have for believing that this change will be oriented toward the ideal? And finally, can we expect that the proletariat in its struggle will take into account certain moral constraints? We will soon see that Marx was not very much concerned with the last question. His earliest reply to the first two questions can be found in "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction":

So where is the *positive* possibility of German emancipation? *This is our answer.* In the formation of a class with *radical chains*, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, . . . a sphere which has a universal character because of its universal suffering and which lays claim to no *particular right* because the wrong it suffers is not a *particular wrong* but *wrong in general*; . . . a sphere which cannot emancipate itself without emancipating itself from—and thereby emancipating—all the other spheres of society, which is, in a word, the *total loss* of humanity and which can therefore redeem itself only through the *total redemption of humanity*. This dissolution of society as a particular class is the *proletariat* (p. 256).

What is most striking about this reply is that Marx ingeniously makes the motivational and directive role of morality superfluous: the total loss of humanity will incite the proletariat to revolutionary action, or so Marx thought, and the historical position of the proletariat as a class that suffers "wrong in general" makes it unnecessary for its struggle to be guided by such moral notions as universal rights or universal emancipation. What is also to be noted is that the reply is a historical prediction along dialectical (and Hegelian) lines, in that history pushes the proletariat into the position of becoming the negation of the existing state of affairs; universal emancipation (communism) as the total redemption of humanity is the negation of the negation.

In *Main Currents of Marxism* (Volume I), Kolakowski presumably rightly claims that this Marxian schema of universal human liberation through proletarian revolution was at the time the result of "a philosophical deduction rather than a product of observa-

tion" (p. 130). Certainly, Kolakowski is correct when he adds that this schema "remained the foundation of [Marx's] social philosophy." In my own terms, Marx continued to describe history as a dialectical process, in which the proletarian overthrow of capitalism is the final negation that brings about the ideal society, while he also continued to adhere to a notion of praxis that makes moral praxis superfluous.

Marx's reductionistic view of praxis in his later work is clearly manifest in *The German Ideology*, where the notion of praxis ("practice") is developed in terms of social activity (to which corresponds his descriptive conception of human nature). Marx distinguishes in this work between the following five basic aspects of social activity:

(a) Social activity is the production of the means of subsistence. Marx considers this to be the most basic aspect of social activity, because life involves, before anything else, eating, drinking, clothing, housing, etc.

(b) Practice under (a) leads to the production of new needs and the instruments with which to satisfy these needs.

(c) Practice includes the propagation of the species. Thus the first social relation arises, the family. This may suggest that Marx is describing stages of historical development, but he states, not surprisingly, that "[t]hese three aspects of social activity are not of course to be taken as three different stages but just as three aspects, . . . which have existed simultaneously since the dawn of history and the first men, and which still assert themselves in history today" (p. 48).

Thus far Marx states what is obvious; few would wish to deny that production of the means of subsistence, human reproduction, and the development of the means of production beyond the subsistence level are basic features of human activity throughout history. The problem with his view arises with the next two aspects of social activity, in which we can see a strong tendency in Marx to reduce *all* forms of human activity to social labor, denying that other forms of activity may have their own efficacy, "logic," standards, and the like:

(d) Practice is "social intercourse," or a "mode of cooperation," and this mode is itself a "productive force." Marx continues: "[T]he aggregate of productive forces accessible to men determine the condition of society; hence, the 'history of humanity' must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange" (p. 49).

(e) Having described the above four aspects of social activity, Marx

states: "Only now . . . do we find that man also possesses 'consciousness' " (*ibid.*). Initially, Marx argues, this "consciousness" was nothing other than consciousness of the collective transformation of nature, but with the division of material and mental labor this changed: "From this moment onwards consciousness *can* really flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice . . . and . . . proceed to the formation of 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc." (p. 50). Marx immediately adds: "But even if this theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc, come into contradiction with the existing relations, this can only occur because existing social [production] relations have come into contradiction with existing productive forces."

Marx's reductionistic thesis that "consciousness" is determined by the productive forces and the production relations of a given society, which, moreover, determine all other social relations (the "condition of society"), is one building block of his materialist conception of history. The other is the dialectical interpretation of historical progress. The *locus classicus* of this conception can be found in the Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, where Marx argues that (a) "[t]he mode of production of material life [consisting of the productive forces and corresponding production relations, which "men enter into . . . independent of their will"] conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general" and that (b) "[a]t a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production . . . From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution" (*The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 4-5).

In *Capital I* this dialectical materialist schema is filled out with regard to capitalist society and its transformation into a higher social formation. Marx concludes this work by predicting an increasing contradiction within the capitalist mode of production, leading to revolution:

[A]s soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet . . . [t]hat which is now to be expropriated is no longer the laborer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many laborers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralization of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralization . . . develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labor-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodological cultivation

of the soil, . . . socialized labor, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic régime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital . . . grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organized by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production. . . . Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated (pp. 762–63).

And as if the dialectic at work is not clear enough, Marx adds that capitalist private property is the negation of individual private property and that “capitalist production begets, with the inexorability of a law of Nature, its own negation. It is the negation of negation. . . . the transformation of capitalistic private property . . . into socialized property” (pp. 763–64).

Two things are to be noted about the above passage. First, Marx’s prediction is not a prediction of hope but rather one of optimism (in the sense in which I have explicated these feelings in Chapter III); for his prediction that capitalism will collapse and lead to a better society is stated in terms of certainty, of immanent (not regulative!) laws, and in terms of laws of nature. Second, the passage indicates that Marx held that what motivates the proletariat to engage in revolutionary action is not a vision of the ideal society and a corresponding sense of duty, but self-interest in its most direct form: the laws of the capitalist production create misery, degradation, subhuman living and working conditions, widespread disease, and even the threat of starvation due to unemployment. All these factors are highlighted in the inevitable recurrent economic crises of capitalism, and it is in one of these crisis situations, Marx thought, that the proletariat would make its decisive move. It is to be observed, however, that the passage leaves room for another interpretation: Marx stresses that the capitalist mode of production creates the skills and conditions of cooperation, and we may consider the possibility that this cooperation is the product not of mere self-interest but of cooperative values acquired in the labor process itself. I will later discuss this interpretation; let me here only point out that this interpretation conflicts with the fact that Marx denied the motivational relevance of moral principles (see below).

It should now be clear on what grounds Marx comes to state in *The German Ideology* that "[t]he communists do not preach *morality* at all" (p. 264). It also should be clear on what grounds he can here directly attack ethical and utopian socialists by stating that

[c]ommunism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise (p. 57).

In summary, these grounds are that what is real in history—what moves history and causes its ultimate realization (communism)—is the mode of production, and what is real on the anthropological level—what moves human beings and causes their ultimate self-realization—is social labor rooted in their basic needs. And the dialectic works on each of these levels. To mention only the individual level, the worker labors under capitalism so as to satisfy his basic needs, but in fact he negates his needs, falling prey to misery and the threat of starvation; he has acquired organizational skills in the collective labor process, and his act of revolution, then, is the negation of the negation, eventually leading to the full satisfaction of all his needs. Further, following Marx, what is not real (*wirklich*), although actual (to use Hegel's distinction, fully accepted by Marx, but used for his own purposes), and what ethical and utopian socialists wrongly took to be real, are the state and cultural institutions on the structural level and "consciousness," including moral motivation and a notion of the ideal society as a moral society, on the individual level.

*The Hegelian Impact: the Progressive
Dialectic as Terror*

For our purposes it is important further to expose the Hegelian elements in Marx. We have seen in Chapter III that Hegel argues that neither "private virtues" nor a critical social morality have any place in history and that the way of history is the road of reason. To recapitulate and somewhat further explicate, Hegel maintains that reason *is* realizing the truly good in cunning fashion, using as its instruments the actions of world-historical individuals, such as Napoleon, as well as those of powerful nations ("national Spirits"). That is to say, these individuals and nations unwittingly promote the modern state and freedom for all, making possible the ultimate aim of reason becoming aware of itself through philosophical reflection. The actions of the world-historical figures

and the powerful nations involve brutal violence and immense human suffering, as Hegel himself emphasizes, but both moral complaints about this and attempts to change this through moral praxis are fruitless and, moreover, misguided, in that they are based on a misunderstanding of the ways of the good (reason). Thus Hegel maintains that the youthful moral idealist wraps himself in the illusion that he and his moral ideals can be the judge and initiator of social change, but in fact his struggle is "deserted by the living Spirit." The older and tolerant person, to the contrary, realizes that history is reason incarnate and, hence, that "the history of the world . . . is the world's court of judgment."

Marx takes over this Hegelian schema but gives his own twist to it. The paradigm of the misguided youthful person is no longer the person of the categorical imperative with his "formal rectitude," but the ethical and utopian socialists with their abstract demands for justice and a moral humanity. And, roughly speaking, the productive forces fulfill a role analogous to that of the state, the bourgeoisie to that of the world-historical individuals, and the leading industrial nations to that of the powerful nations. Moreover, Hegel's view of history as the unfolding of reason can be put on a par with Marx's view of history as developing from primitive communism (reason in itself) to full communism (reason in and for itself). Thus Hegel's cunning of reason becomes in Marx the cunning of communism, as it were, embedded in the socioeconomic process, in which the capitalists so develop the means of production that the emergence of the new social formation is inevitable, a development which takes place against their will (behind their backs). The passage just cited from *Capital I* displays this cunning, and we may here also cite Marx's famous words from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that in revolutionizing the productive forces the bourgeoisie has "forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians" (p. 478). "What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers" (483).

History, as the unfolding of reason or communism, then, is on the side of the proletariat, just as Hegel saw it on the side of his universal class—the civil servants of the modern state (see *Philosophy of Right*, p. 132; § 205). In either case, this class constitutes the "historical guarantee" for the ultimate aim. This means that the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat is not right because it accords with some philosophically defended and projected ideal, as the neo-Kantian socialists argued, but right simply because it *is* the

struggle of the proletariat. In other words, the particular location of the working class in the historical process legitimates its existence and its struggle. Once this position is adopted, a moral defense of the struggle of the proletariat becomes superfluous. Marx writes in *Capital I*:

The capitalist maintains his rights as a purchaser when he tries to make the working-day as long as possible. [T]he laborer maintains his right as seller when he wishes to reduce the working-day to one of definite normal duration. There is here, therefore, an antinomy, right against right, both equally bearing the seal of the law of exchanges. Between equal rights force decides (pp. 234–35).

These statements do not show that Marx actually thought that both the capitalists and the proletarians were right to an equal degree, as some recent Marx commentators have contested²⁵; rather, they reflect his conviction that history will reveal whose rights will prevail and that any rights claim is irrelevant and ineffective in this respect. As Marx said elsewhere, “[h]istory is the judge—its executioner, the proletarian.”²⁶

Marx’s use of metaphors such as ‘grave-digger’ and ‘executioner’ suggests that the revolution of the proletariat will lead to a complete break with present reality and that it is not the task of those who bring about the new world to pause and think about the means that are justified in the light of this end. The following passage from *The German Ideology* illustrates this; here Marx attacks in typical Hegelian fashion those who have moral qualms about the ways of the good (the direct target is Bruno Bauer’s doubt about the necessity of revolution in order to establish “real humanism”):

[He] will be greatly surprised when judgment day overtakes him, the day when all this is to come to pass—a day when the reflection in the sky of burning cities will mark the dawn, when together with the “celestial harmonies” the tunes of the *Marseillaise* and *Carmagnole* will echo in his ears accompanied by the requisite roar of cannon, with the guillotine beating time (p. 61n).²⁷

And, like Hegel, Marx contends that our personal moral feelings are a bad guide when the issue is progress through the violent dialectic. Thus he writes in an article on imperialism in India that, although the destruction of the village system in India caused by British industry and trade is a bitter pill for our personal feelings, this is irrelevant, because England is “the unconscious tool of his-

tory" in creating a social revolution in India, sweeping away its backwardness and repressive political order. Marx argues that this social revolution with all its suffering will lead to the final revolution between capital and collective labor and that, therefore, "we have the right, in point of history, to exclaim with Goethe: Should this torture then torment us? Since it brings us greater pleasure? Were not through the rule of Timor, Souls devoured without measure?"²⁸

Marx's view concerning the role of leading industrial nations, such as England, in bringing about progress in less industrialized nations, mirrors Hegel's view on the role of national Spirits. The industrial nations, thanks to their ever-expanding productive power, unwittingly and inevitably promote progress toward the socialist/communist ideal, and, hence, any condemnation of the cunning ways of progress on an international scale seems to be misplaced. Marx remains rather constrained in defending this view in his article on imperialism in India. Yet he greatly exaggerates the backwardness of India and its oppressive political order so as to drive home his point that the only road to the emancipation of its people is the imperialistic industrial power of Europe.²⁹ Thus Marx "permits" us secretly to enjoy the terror of this power. Engels showed himself less restrained in this regard in some of the articles he wrote for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (1849), echoing Hegel in the indictment of all countries, peoples, or struggles that are outside, or against, the stream of the progressive dialectic:

There is no country in Europe that does not possess, in some remote corner, at least one remnant-people, left over from an earlier population, forced back and subjugated by the nation which later become the repository of historical development. These remnants of a nation, mercilessly crushed, as Hegel said, by the course of history, this *national refuse*, is always the fanatical representative of the counterrevolution and remains so until it is completely exterminated or de-nationalized, as its whole existence is in itself a protest against a great historical revolution.

And will Bakunin reproach the Americans with this 'war of conquest' [against Mexico, 1845–47] which admittedly gives a hard knock to his theory based on 'justice and humanity,' but which was waged simply and solely in the interests of civilization? Or is it perhaps a misfortune that magnificent California was snatched from the lazy Mexicans . . . ? Or that the energetic Yankees . . . are about to give world trade a new direction for the third time in history? The 'independence' of a few Spanish Californians and Texans may suffer by this, 'justice' and other moral principles may be infringed here and there; but what does that matter against such world-historical events?³⁰

And obviously, this infringement becomes even less than a triviality once the concern is a historical event that ends history proper and gives rise to a new humanity: the revolution of the proletariat.

A Kantian Critique

Cohen begins his critique of Marx's view of history and morality on a positive note. After observing that historical materialists deny that moral ideas play any significant role in shaping human history, he states:

It might quite well be that one is so indignant about the hypocritical use of moral ideas that one points to the immoral power relations in order to unmask in them the driving force of all past history. This would be then anything but materialism, but rather a restrained idealism which guides this view of history (*Pure Will*, pp. 36–37).

And in a similar vein Cohen writes:

When the socialism of a Marx, from its high historical perspective, insists on the compelling power of material conditions, it unwittingly becomes satire. A fiery ethical spirit motivates all his great work, theoretical as well as practical. It were pedantry to offer to such an emissary of the God of history little maxims of spiritualistic morality (*ibid.*, p. 312).³¹

On Cohen's account, then, the role of morality in Marx's work is "repressed," and one reason for this might be that Marx rightly claimed that morality functions all too often as an ideological prop for immoral conditions. But, Cohen continues to argue, it must nonetheless be said that "[t]he materialist conception of history is a logical mistake, and, since the issue is a moral problem, it also is a moral mistake" (*ibid.*, p. 313).

The logical mistake is that history is approached as determined by economic forces or laws, so that the laws of morality remain outside the picture. Or, as Cohen also puts it, the materialist conception of history errs in its determination of the relation between theoretical concept and practical idea, between logic and ethics, and between natural science and ethics, in each case reducing the latter to the former. The upshot is that this conception of history leads to an elimination or abolition of history. Cohen states: "Either history as the history of humanity and its works and deeds is a history of spirituality and [practical] ideas, or there is no history of the world but only a natural history" (*ibid.*, p. 39). Even more appropriately, he points out that Marx's view transforms social

ethics into a social physics (*ibid.*, p. 313). The proper alternative is to recognize that pure practical reason produces moral ideas and that these ideas, in no matter what concealed or distorted form, do play a role in shaping the historical drama—an alternative which follows from, or is a presupposition of, the transcendental method—for otherwise, Cohen argues, we are forced to bring morality back onto the scene by sleight of hand. Cohen writes: “It is . . . a false realism and nominalism to represent on the one hand everything as the product of economic forces, while on the other hand moral tasks are seen as fearful apparitions and as post-historical forces that appear as sheet-lightning in the hitherto dark historical sky” (*ibid.*, p. 38).³² Thus the logical error becomes a moral error: values are significant only at the “last moment.” (Besides, Marx engaged in considerable effort to free the ethical and utopian socialists from their “apparitions,” thus unwittingly acknowledging their significance.) And we may add that philosophy as critique becomes a meaningful activity only at the moment when it is no longer really necessary, i.e., in the post-historical ideal society when the natural history of humanity has been overcome and is replaced by a history of self-determination. What Cohen, however, emphasizes in particular is that the materialist conception of history implies that the legal system and the state are seen as “mere imaginary realities” and as “shadows” of the production relations. The result is that the political process is not viewed as a true road of emancipation. And, Cohen suggests, although the German socialists were at the time through their reformative political efforts in fact the defenders of justice and the state, this created a certain “uneasiness” in that such efforts conflicted with their “official” Marxist theory, which told them to seek the “eruptive revolution,” sweeping aside the necessity for the political state in the first place.³³

Notwithstanding their rather synoptic character, Cohen’s criticisms of Marx’s materialist conception of history deserve our admiration, not only because Cohen was undoubtedly one of the first to launch such criticisms, but also because embedded in them is much sympathy with Marx and the socialist cause at the time, which was no small feat in the repressive academic climate of Wilhelmian Germany. Currently, the main gist of Cohen’s critique is most explicitly and fully set forth in the Frankfurt School, notably in the work of Habermas. Habermas contends that Marx failed to see that the human agent is both a tool-making and a “symbolizing” animal—that is, labor and language are fundamental anthropological categories in the sense that one cannot be reduced to

the other. And what Habermas means by "language" is the communicative or interactive dimension of human existence, which includes moral praxis and reflection (critique). Furthermore, Habermas argues that Marx's self-understanding is too limited in that he considers the knowledge acquired in the production process—practice as productive labor—as the model for all knowledge. This is exemplified by Marx's statements that the "science of man" must be developed as a natural science and that the critique of political economy is a natural science of society.³⁴ The result is, Habermas argues, that Marx failed to recognize that his own empirical and historical studies involve a critique of society in the true sense of critique—that is, a reflective study directed toward human emancipation. All this accords basically with Cohen's claims that Marx's materialist conception of history reduces practical ideas to theoretical concepts and ethics to logic and natural science, while at the same time a "fiery ethical spirit" lies at the basis of all his writings. And Cohen could not but have agreed with Habermas's statement that "[l]iberation from hunger and misery does not necessarily converge with liberation from servitude and degradation, for there is no automatic developmental relation between labor and interaction,"³⁵ implying that human emancipation requires not only instrumental or economic efforts but also communicative, i.e., moral and political efforts, including critical reflection. Yet, although Habermas is not unfamiliar with Cohen's work, he fails to note that the basic premises of his own analysis can already be found in Cohen.³⁶

Cohen's contention that the materialist conception of history steered the German socialists wrong-headedly in the direction of the "eruptive revolution" has frequently been misinterpreted. Most Cohen commentators, and, of course, in particular his orthodox Marxist opponents, accusing him of "bourgeois reformism," have taken this to mean that he opposed revolution under all circumstances.³⁷ Textual evidence conflicts with this interpretation. Like Kant, Cohen expressed his commitment to the French Revolution and its ideals, and he states, moreover, that "all reform and epoch-making revolution in religion, as in politics, is ethical idealism, even though principled awareness may be lacking." Cohen adds: "*Reforms and revolutions are periods of experimental ethics*" (*Pure Will*, p. 328). Cohen does not specify under what circumstances revolution is justified, but my thesis, defended earlier, that revolution is justified if there are no other options left to counteract a systematic repression of the conditions of autonomy, is consistent with his ethics. Clearly, Cohen held that such conditions

did not prevail in Germany at the turn of the century, and on this score there was, at least in practice, no disagreement between Cohen and most other German socialists.

A broader meaning, however, can be given to Cohen's critique. What he objects to is that the dialectical logic embedded in the materialist conception of history legitimates revolutionary violence *a priori*. Communism as the *telos* of history unfolds itself through the negation of the existing state of affairs, and negation stands here for revolution. Thus dialectical thought seems to exclude the possibility of fundamental change through reformative steps and to call instead for class polarization and structural violence, irrespective of the empirical conditions at hand. Furthermore, what is objectionable about the Marxian notion of revolution as the negation of the negation is its eschatological exaggeration. Although Marx develops the idea of a transitional society, he also often suggests that one final revolution will suffice to bring about a complete break with reality as we know it—the emergence of the communist society as a brotherhood of humans, including even the complete reconciliation between humanity and external nature (see *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 348). This eschatological thinking also is manifest in Marx's claim in *The German Ideology* that a proletarian revolution is necessary, "not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew" (p. 60). This idea that time can come to a stop in the revolutionary act and that humanity can start with a clean slate is simply naive in the light of even a superficial knowledge of what revolutions have been able to effect in human history. This naiveté may lead to despair and even pessimism when the "new era" fails to materialize along the lines of such irrational expectations. It is also an invitation to brute oppression, so as to clean the people of the "muck." To limit my remarks to morality, the Kantian view is that there is no sudden break in moral progress; rather, the moral ideal sets an infinite task along gradualist lines. In accordance with this, Cohen counterposes a "steady [permanent] revolution" to the "eruptive revolution" ("Critical Epilogue," p. 294). This does not exclude the possibility of sudden changes in the *conditions* of autonomy—revolutionary institutional changes—or the desirability thereof; what it means is that the realization of autonomy itself must be expected to proceed in incremental steps. Kantian ethics would, of course, not mind being wrong about this, but a glance at ourselves or the world should

suffice to make clear that it is not plausible to hope for more. It is a hope that needs to be defended in the light of the deplorable history of humanity.

Cohen launches similar, although more biting criticisms against Hegel than against Marx. And, indeed, both Marx's and Hegel's views of history develop within the same basic conceptual framework. In either case, historical data are placed within a dialectical schema, and the purpose of history is seen as the product of immanent laws, implying the reductionistic view that practical reason and moral ideas have no role to play independent of the movement of the "concept" (i.e., Spirit or communism, with the state or the productive forces as their main means of "self-realization"). Cohen is particularly bitter about Hegel's saying that "what is rational is real, and what is real is rational," commenting that "[p]erhaps nothing has contributed so much to making philosophy contemptible in the pre-revolutionary [1848] age than [this] reactionary motto" (*ibid.*, p. 211).³⁸ Cohen adds that Hegel thus destroys the distinction between "being" and "ought," as well as between "reality" and "task" or "[practical] idea." And, in *Pure Will*, Cohen sums up his critique by stating with regard to Hegel's system: "[O]ld dogmatic metaphysics in modern historical dress here takes the place of ethics" (p. 45). This criticism also applies to Marx. Cohen is well aware of this, as is manifest from his statement that Marx let the "ought" come out of the "being" in the form of post-historical forces. Yet, Cohen does not further elaborate how Marx's Hegelian schema of fusing together the "ought" and "being" can lead to uncritical or misplaced justifications other than by suggesting that Marx offers a misguided a priori legitimation of the "eruptive revolution."

That this schema fulfills other such justificatory purposes is clear from my exposition of the Hegelian impact on Marx. Like Hegel, Marx tends to justify human evil in the name of the progressive dialectic, representing the "objective" interest of humanity. Thus we have noted that Marx "permits" us secretly to enjoy British imperialism, and Engels displays outright contempt for all those people, nations, or struggles which are outside, or against, the "stream" of history (they have existence but are not *wirklich*). It is to be admitted, however, that this type of justification is less clearly pronounced in Marx's work than in Hegel's. This is not surprising; for Marx holds that the final goal of history lies in the future, whereas Hegel ascribes a *telos* to history which he saw actualized in its major features in his own society. Moreover, contrary to Hegel, Marx is not engaged in a theodicy. Yet, Marx is

not always prepared to call evil by its name, at least if on his account this evil serves the ultimate communist goal. To provide another illustration, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is both a condemnation of the bourgeoisie and an ode to its productive power. We see Marx saying here with obvious approval that the bourgeoisie has drawn "even the most barbarian nations into civilization" and that the creation of its immense cities "has . . . rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life" (p. 477). We do not have to decide what is more striking here, Marx's cultural bias or his virtual silence concerning the fact that these bourgeois "accomplishments" involved brute oppression.

To digress for a moment, although one of the greatest merits of Marx's materialist conception of history is that it has stimulated extensive historical research concerning the working class and its representatives, we should also note the opposite side of the coin: his emphasis on the productive forces as the main vehicle of human emancipation tends to be at the cost of the significance of the revolutionary subject. It is, for example, striking that Marx said in a speech to radical workers in London (1852) that the "so-called Revolutions of 1848 were but poor incidents," although they announce the "abyss," and that "[s]team, electricity, and the self-acting mule were revolutionists of a rather more dangerous character than even citizens Barbès, Raspail and Blanqui."³⁹ It would perhaps be pressing the matter too hard to maintain that Marx is degrading human agents who sought the betterment of the working class to the status of unsuccessful means only; but certainly Marx displays here little sensitivity to what, in Chapter III, I have argued is an important theoretical and practical task of a (socialist) philosophy of praxis: to uphold human dignity in the face of progress. Likewise, Marx seems not to have been very much concerned with another problem that I have discussed in the same context, namely the issue of anamnestic solidarity. After noting that Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* argues that the "social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future," and that this revolution "must let the dead bury their dead," Christian Lenhardt states in a recent paper on anamnestic solidarity: "[T]he analysis itself might be called technically sophisticated. [However], I can see nothing else here but an instrumentalistic concern with revolution."⁴⁰ And, a little further on, he concludes that "[t]he ancestors are not expressly assigned the role of avengable predecessors in the Marxian scheme of things. Their tendency

to interfere with the really serious business of the living is counterproductive, as the modern phrase goes, and hence they had better be forgotten" (p. 148).

To come back to the main line of argument, what is more objectionable and, historically speaking, of greater weight than Marx's tendency to justify human evils in the light of their alleged positive effect in bringing about the ideal society, is that the very notion of immanent and inevitable historical progress constitutes a backhanded way of justifying social action. Taken literally, this notion makes any justification of social action superfluous, in that acting, or feeling obliged to act, is determined by the social order of things. The practical consequence is that the materialist conception of history invites us not to act, and, hence, this theory conflicts with the primacy of praxis. The same conclusion follows from Marx's contention that "[n]o social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have fully developed."⁴¹ Yet, throughout his work, Marx condemns certain groups or classes for not acting in the right way (and the situation is not altogether different for Hegel). We learn, for example, from the *Manifesto* that "[t]he lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, [and] the peasant [are] conservative" and that a variety of socialist or communist groups are mistaken, because, among other reasons, they promote the creation of experimental ideal communities within the existing order and seek to proceed along gradualist peaceful lines. So what is the basis of these evaluative claims? Marx states: "The lower middle class . . . , the artisan, the peasant, all these fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history" (*ibid.*, 482). Marx launches similar criticisms against the wrong-headed socialists and communists. So the question becomes, What is the direction of the wheel of history? Once we know this, we have a criterion for right action. But, of course, our capacity to predict future events in such detail that they can guide our actions is rather limited. What this means is that Marx's predictive claims hide an evaluative claim that refuses to explicate and defend itself. Practical choices—revolution versus reformative change, political organizing within capitalist factories versus the starting of cooperatives, present well-being versus future emancipation, and the like—are covered up as *mere* questions of theoretical necessity. History as the judge, then, is Marx as the judge.

Besides, we can always repudiate the turn of the wheel of history from an independently formed evaluative platform.

The crux of the matter is that the idea of history as the judge discourages the formation of such a platform. In practical reality, it is the leaders, notably the leaders of the "progressive" party, who determine the destiny of the dialectic. Thus right action becomes that which accords with their understanding of the course of history. The members of the party relinquish their independent moral judgment. The wheel of history traces the line of the party, writing 'democratic centralism' in its path of human destruction and oppression. With obvious reference to the Stalinist era and the communist parties of the Comintern, Kolakowski states:

What is basic is that the communists who believed in the absolute amorality of history believed at the same time in the superfluousness of every morality capable of emancipating itself from history's demands, and that they took no interest in the substance of that historical necessity at whose doorstep they laid their own conformity. They . . . shift[ed] the heavy burden of inquiring into the designs of the demiurge of history onto the shoulders of their superiors. They willingly agreed to let others divine the shrewd intentions of the *Weltgeist* and announce the results of their communion with it (*Toward a Marxist Humanism*, p. 121).

Thus Kolakowski rightly speaks of "the opiate of the *Weltgeist*," capturing the fact that the Hegelian dimension in the materialist conception of history makes this conception analogous to religion as the "opium of the people." And what needs to be stressed is that the prediction of the course of the *Weltgeist* contains evaluative elements, if it is only because in its name moral crimes have been committed for the sake of its alleged inevitable *telos*.

Two of my criticisms of Marx's Hegelian notion of historical progress may be approached from a different angle: this notion gives rise to what Kant calls the "despotic moralist" and the "political moralist." Recall that the former fails to recognize and follow the rules of political prudence in his enthusiasm for the moral ideal, while the latter claims that the end justifies the means. Marx's eschatological exaggeration concerning the effects of a socialist revolution reflects the position of the despotic moralist. And behind his thesis of history as the judge we can discover the viewpoint of the political moralist. Looking back at the history of Marxism, we can discern that Kant was right on two scores: both positions lead to moral terrorism, but experience may lead the despotic moralist to a better course, whereas the oppressive

means employed by the political moralist block his vision of the end and eventually tend to become the end.

In recapitulation, Marx's elimination of the various functions of morality in adopting a Hegelian framework for his social theory leads to a dogmatic and reductionistic view of history, which is implausible in itself and which contradicts the whole point of developing a critique of society. Moreover, this view of history leads to an uncritical legitimization of revolutionary violence, creates unrealistic expectations concerning the effects of revolutionary change, and lends itself to making the unacceptable "acceptable"—that is, terror for the sake of "progress." In sum, the Marxian amoral history for the sake of moral purposes leads to immorality.

3. On the Role of Morality for Social Action (B): The Kantian Elements in Marx

The materialist conception of history conflicts with the primacy of praxis in Marx's work. Thus we may reinterpret his prediction concerning the inevitable collapse of capitalist society and the emergence of the socialist society as a regulative idea, intended to stimulate social action toward the ideal. Undoubtedly, this has been one historical effect of Marx's work. This means that there is a tension between Kantian and Hegelian elements in his writings—but more about this later. Presently, it is to be noted that, if we look at Marx's prediction as a regulative prediction, it can be placed on a par with Kant's regulative idea that a race of intelligent devils will opt for the perfect state (and peace between the nations). To be sure, the two ideas are on different levels of progress—following Kant's distinction, Marx's idea is focused on the technological level, whereas Kant's own idea is centered on the pragmatic level—and they have different main ends in view, the socialized mode of production and political peace, respectively. Also, the mechanisms of the cunning of nature are different: in Kant it is the ravages of war and political conflict that lead selfish intelligent persons to organize political peace, whereas in Marx it is the revolutionary expansion of the production forces and the resulting misery of the proletariat that bring this class to the realization of the socialized mode of production. Yet, what the two ideas have essentially in common is that it is predicted that the existing state of affairs will evolve in such a way that self-interest will compel human agents to bring about a certain ideal, while this

same process will also provide the organizational means and skills for this collective action. Moreover, in each case the self-interest thesis is a minimal assumption for the sake of *moral* action toward the ideal, in that it offers hope, facilitating the undertaking of this action. And we may even interpret Marx as following Kant in claiming that such moral action will then hasten the “inevitable” realization of the ideal.⁴²

The regulative idea that a race of intelligent proletarian devils will opt for the socialized mode of production is inadequate. This idea can be refuted along the same lines along which I have rebutted Kant’s idea that intelligent devils will opt for political peace; but, rather than stress the indispensable directive function of morality, I will now focus on its motivational significance. My refutation will be based on the public-goods objection to Marx’s account of revolutionary motivation, as raised and discussed in Chapter V of Allen E. Buchanan’s *Marx and Justice*. Buchanan does not project Marx’s prediction of the socialist revolution as a regulative prediction, but this does not make his analysis less fruitful for our purposes.

*Revolutionary Motivation and Morality:
The Public-goods Objection*

Buchanan sets out to show that “even if revolution is in the best interest of the proletariat and even if every member of the proletariat realizes that this is so, so far as its members act rationally, this class will *not* achieve concerted revolutionary action” (*ibid.*, p. 88). This conclusion assumes that revolution is, for the proletariat, a public good in the technical sense: its success will be beneficial to all workers, even those who do not revolt. Another presupposition is that the proletarians seek to maximize their self-interest—that is, rational behavior is acting as a maximizer of one’s own utility.⁴³ Both assumptions are justified in the light of Marx’s sketch of how capitalism will be transformed into socialism, and, certainly, they accord with the regulative idea that proletarian devils will opt for the socialized mode of production. Now what threatens the pursuit of the socialist revolution is the “free-rider” problem. Each member of the proletariat, if rational, will reason as follows: “Regardless of whether I engage in revolutionary action and pay the price for doing so, either enough other proletarians will participate in the struggle to make it a success, or this will not be the case. (In other words, it is extremely unlikely that my participation will make the difference between success and failure.) If the former is the case, then I will enjoy the benefits of revolution and I do not

have to pay the price for participation. If the second alternative is correct, my contribution would be wasted and again a loss to me. So rational self-interest requires that I do not engage in revolutionary action but go for a 'free ride' on the efforts of other workers." The revolution, then, will not occur when *all* proletarians act as rational self-interested agents (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 89–90).

Buchanan argues that there are two types of strategy that might be used to refute the public-goods objection. The first attempts to show that there is no public-goods problem for the proletariat; the second tries to solve the problem. Buchanan discusses three versions of the first strategy: (a) historical materialism as an epiphenomenalism, (b) absolute immiseration, and (c) a socialist conception of rationality. Following version (a), there is no public-goods problem for the proletariat, because the members of this class do not engage in utilitarian considerations but rather act in automatic response to changing economic conditions. This solution is Marxian reductionism in the extreme, and we do not have to discuss it, since it conflicts with a regulative interpretation of Marx's prediction of progress.

Solution (b) is that the socialist revolution will occur at the moment that capitalism has pushed the proletariat into a condition of absolute misery. The public-goods problem then does not arise because the costs of revolutionary action appear to be negligible as compared with the suffering imposed by capitalist exploitation. One difficulty with this solution is that it is empirically untenable; for capitalism has not led to absolute misery, and there is no good reason to assume that this will happen in the future. In predicting such increasing misery, Marx seems to have overlooked the possibility that the capitalists would organize themselves so as to prevent their own demise as a result of recurrent economic crises and the centralization of capital (cf. *ibid.*, p. 91). Another difficulty with solution (b) is that it is doubtful that absolute misery incites revolutionary action—where there is no hope, no sense of human dignity, and the like, there is no social action toward the better. It is to be granted, however, that Marx's *immiseration thesis* also may be interpreted as stating that capitalism leads to *relative immiseration*—that is, an increasing gap between the wealth of the workers and that of the capitalists. There is conflicting textual evidence for this interpretation, but one reason for accepting it is that the economic position of the English working class was already improving in terms of better wages, shorter working hours, etc., during the two decades when Marx was preparing his *magnum opus*, *Capital I*. The relative immiseration thesis offers a great gain in empirical

credibility, but also brings the public-goods objection fully back into the picture; for the costs of revolutionary action can no longer be discounted when the proletarians have more to lose than their chains of oppression.

Solution (c) is that a nonutilitarian socialist rationality will become predominant among the proletarians so that the public-goods problem will not exist for them. Buchanan does not tell us what the possible content of this rationality might be, but rather brings up this solution to challenge those Marxists who may wish to argue that maximization of self-interest is a mere bourgeois form of rationality which the proletariat will gradually overcome. Solution (c) is incompatible with the regulative idea that proletarian devils will opt for a socialized mode of production, and, indeed, Buchanan also contends that this solution is hard to reconcile with Marx's interest account of revolutionary motivation (see *ibid.*, p. 99). Another problem Buchanan raises is that it will be difficult to give adequate content to this socialist rationality without making an appeal to moral principles, a procedure which must be followed because Marx denied that such principles have a significant role to play in revolutionary motivation. We may add that, even if we set aside this latter point and incorporate moral principles, version (c) does not seem to be satisfactory; for it seems more correct to say that moral rationality solves the public-goods problem than that it implies that this problem does not emerge in the first place. This is certainly so if we take as our model Kantian moral rationality; for neither Cohen nor Kant denies that maximization of self-interest plays an important role in our lives. Rather, on their account, moral reason provides a motive for bracketing such utilitarian considerations.

Buchanan also discusses three versions of the second strategy: (d) coercion, (e) in-process benefits, and (f) moral principles. Version (d) offers a solution for the public-goods problem because the use of force against nonparticipants during the revolutionary struggle creates a (potential) cost for the individual worker, offsetting the benefit of becoming a free rider. However, the efficacy of force here, as compared with the standard cases of the public-goods problem, is rather limited, for there are essential differences between revolution as a public good and, say, a pollution-free environment as a public good. The revolutionaries typically lack an extensive coercive agency (like the state), and the victims of their coercion may join the counterrevolutionary forces. Nonetheless, the history of the communist movement, or, for that matter, the history of many workers' struggles, shows that solution (d) has

some bite to it, and what reinforces this is that we are assuming here that the socialist revolution is in the interest of all proletarians. There is, however, no textual evidence that Marx adhered to this solution. Force plays an important role in his vision of the proletarian revolution, but it is force used against the capitalists and their collaborators. As Buchanan observes, for Marx the communist party did not have a police function but constituted the educational and tactical elite of the workers' movement (*ibid.*, p. 93). Accordingly, although solution (d) is all in all viable, the public-goods objection to Marx's own account of revolutionary motivation still stands. Or, to put it otherwise, solution (d) conflicts with the regulative idea that proletarian devils will opt for a socialized mode of production.

Buchanan suggests a different variant of solution (d), stating that "some group [will] threaten to use violence against non-contributors once the proletariat achieves power" (*ibid.*, p. 92). Buchanan does not tell us in what form this violence will occur, but, practically speaking, there seems to be only one generally effective approach, namely, for the revolutionary group to exclude the nonparticipants from enjoying all the benefits of the revolution. Now a similar problem arises in the first place with regard to version (d); for we must with Buchanan ask the question: "who is supposed to use coercion against the proletarians to secure their participation and, more importantly, what motivates these motivators and how does their motivation achieve collective action?" (*ibid.*, p. 93). Buchanan leaves this question more or less unanswered. For our purposes it suffices to note that, in the absence of moral principles, the enforcing group can solve its *own* public-goods problem, i.e., achieve collective action as a group, only when it conveys special benefits upon itself after the revolution. And so again we can conclude that version (d) conflicts with the regulative idea that proletarian devils will opt for a socialized mode of production; instead, they will actualize a mode of production that offers special benefits to the revolutionary vanguard.

Solution (e) is that there are certain benefits inherent in revolutionary action which outweigh the costs of engaging in this action, thus changing the utilitarian calculus in favor of revolutionary action, as opposed to being a free rider. Buchanan (p. 94) cites the following passage from *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (p. 365) to show that Marx may have recognized the importance of in-process benefits:

When communist *workmen* gather together, their immediate aim is instruction, propaganda, etc. But at the same time they acquire a new

need—the need for society—and what appears as a means has become an end. This practical development can be most strikingly observed in the gatherings of French socialist workers. Smoking, eating and drinking, etc., are no longer means of creating links between people. Company, association, conversation, which in its turn has society as its goal, is enough for them. The brotherhood of man is not a hollow phrase, it is reality, and the nobility of man shines forth upon us from their work-worn figures.

There are three difficulties with this solution (cf. *Marx and Justice*, pp. 94–95). First, Marx frequently emphasizes that egoism, competition, and individualism live among the workers in capitalist society. Moreover, he also maintains that unemployment strengthens the competitive spirit, driving a wedge between the workers. It is doubtful that associational benefits suffice to overcome these mechanisms of interpersonal separation. Second, it is not very plausible to hold that in-process benefits can really offset the costs of revolutionary action when the chips are down. Revolutionary motivation based on such benefits seems too weak when revolutionary action is met with brute force, and Marx describes capitalist society as a society with the likelihood of such use of force; hence his usual insistence that the proletarian struggle requires force for its success. We may note, moreover, that even reformatory action (e.g., civil disobedience) may cause serious harm to its participants in the form of police violence, imprisonment, and so on. Third, in-process benefits are of little help in explaining how revolutionary organizations come into existence in the first place. What motivates its initiators?

Solution (f) provides an answer and solves the public-goods problem in general. Adherence to moral principles that require one to establish ideal institutions produces cooperation in situations where none would be forthcoming if individuals sought to maximize their own self-interest. Thus Buchanan comes to state: "Marx seems to have overlooked the possibility that even where morality and interest seem to speak as with one voice, morality may still have an ineliminable function" (*ibid.*, p. 97). And Buchanan concludes with good reason that "[t]he foregoing analysis may help account for the persistence of two phenomena [among revolutionary workers' struggles]: the revolutionary's use of violence against the members of the proletariat and his reliance upon what Marx called 'obsolete verbal rubbish' about justice and rights" (*ibid.*, pp. 100–01).⁴ Clearly, either one of these courses of action—coercion and appeal to moral principles—is inconsistent with the regulative idea that mere self-interest suffices, in principle, to bring the proletarians to collective action toward the so-

cialized mode of production. The only solution that is compatible with a plausible interpretation of this idea is solution (e), and this solution is not adequate to the task. It follows that this idea is not suitable for supporting the hope for a socialized mode of production and the praxis connected with this hope.

We should, however, not draw the opposite conclusion that only a race of saints can bring about a socialist revolution. There are two reasons for this.⁴⁵ First, although it seems essential to the initiation and successful continuation of a revolutionary struggle that a sizable number of its participants have a strong moral commitment to their cause, others may display a more conditional cooperative attitude. That is to say, the latter are prepared to participate if there is some assurance that others will participate as well and that the revolutionary struggle will be successful. It would be a mistake, I think, to deny that this common conditional attitude lacks a moral dimension; yet, it must also be distinguished from moral commitment proper. Moreover, it is to be noted that a conditional cooperative attitude alone does not suffice for collective action. This is so not only because it is inadequate for the initiation of such action, but also because it is likely to be unstable in the face of setbacks, counterrevolutionary violence, etc. Second, we have until now paid little attention to the fact that a revolution is a dynamic process, and this very fact is conducive to revolutionary participation by utility maximizers. The reason for this is that utility calculations of individuals change once the revolutionary struggle is on its way; for the more people join this struggle, the smaller the risk of being punished. Also, in-process benefits may increase when the revolutionary struggle is beyond its initial stage. Thus we may expect that more and more self-interested agents will join the revolutionary struggle when the oppressive regime shows signs of being close to its ultimate downfall. In short, a more dynamic model of revolution shows that self-interested agents can more adequately come to cooperation than a less dynamic model would suggest. But again, we should recognize that there are clear limits to the efficacy of such dynamic mechanisms. One problem is that they do not explain how the revolutionary struggle gets started. Another problem is that participation by utility maximizers is not one-directional: they may come to the conclusion that it is in their best interest to become free riders once enough others have joined the revolutionary struggle or once the oppressive regime fully exercises its coercive apparatus. Special benefits, revolutionary violence against nonparticipants, and moral commitment provide solutions for both problems, but only the moral

approach will lead to a socialized mode of production in the true sense of the word.

We started our discussion of the public-goods objection by assuming that the socialized mode of production is in the interest of all proletarians and that they all are aware of this. Neither assumption is defensible, and this further strengthens the case for morality. To begin with, individuals may have a distorted understanding of their needs and social situation, making necessary a critique of ideology. Such a critique appeals to the notion of human emancipation, which is a moral notion. Furthermore, there is no such thing as *the* interest of the proletariat, and, contra Marx, capitalism has never led to a social condition in which the proletariat suffers "wrong in general." The different segments of the working class have conflicting particular interests, a fact which is gratefully used by modern management technicians and by the ruling classes in general to maintain the capitalist status quo. Also, Marx's idea of a socialized mode of production has an international orientation, and there is a clear conflict between the mere self-interest of the working class of the wealthy nations and that of the developing nations. Thus we can further underline the conclusion following from the public-goods objection: proletarian devils will opt for a mode of production that reflects particular interests, not the universal interest. Or, to put it otherwise, the cunning mechanisms of history cannot bring about a universal class; rather, the idea of such a class is a moral ideal that encompasses all of humanity and sets an ethical task. The realization of the socialized mode of production, then, requires not only the motivational function of morality but also its directive function. And we have seen in the previous section that the corrective function of morality is needed as well, placing constraints upon the means of revolutionary change. The upshot is that the hope for socialism must be differently grounded. Or, at least, the idea that proletarian devils will opt for the socialized mode of production needs to be supplemented by the idea that socialist values emerge within the capitalist mode of production itself.

Moral Progress in the Economic Realm

Kant's main argument for supporting the hope that moral progress is taking place on the pragmatic or political level is that the French Revolution and the enthusiasm it incited among its spectators signify that a moral cause is operative in humanity, which is directed toward the perfect state and international peace. More broadly, we

may reconstruct Kant as holding that moral progress emerges on the pragmatic level within the dialectic of self-interest, including the culture of skill and the culture of self-discipline. (It remains, of course, true that Kant in fact placed too much emphasis on the view that moral progress evolves after the cunning of nature has done its work—a view that lacks mediation.) Can we discern similar approaches in Marx's work in respect to the economic or technological level? If so, we may be able to extract from his work an adequate regulative idea concerning progress toward the economic ideal. (Progress on the pragmatic level and its impact on progress on the economic level must also be taken into account, but for the sake of brevity and clarity I will not make this a special issue of consideration.)

Although a variety of proletarian struggles provided Marx with hope that his socialist or communist ideal was historically tenable—as the French Revolution, and also the American Revolution, provided hope for Kant—the historical event that stands out in Marx's work is the Paris Commune. Notwithstanding that Marx had some doubts about the long-term viability of this social experiment, he discusses the Commune with unrestrained enthusiasm in *The Civil War in France*.⁴⁶ He quotes with obvious approval the manifesto issued by the Central Committee of the Commune on March 18, 1871, which states that the workers of Paris “have understood that it is their imperious duty and their absolute right to render themselves masters of their own destinies, by seizing upon the governmental power” (p. 206). Marx mentions a variety of beneficial products of the exercise of this right, such as the disappearance of street crime under the Commune, the disappearance of prostitutes—“[i]n their stead, the real women of Paris showed again at the surface—heroic, noble, and devoted, like the women of antiquity” (p. 220)—, and the opening of educational institutions to all people. Marx adds: “[N]ot only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it” (pp. 209–10). The broader historical significance of the Commune must, however, be sought elsewhere. Marx states:

That the workmen of Paris have taken the initiative of the present revolution and in heroic self-sacrifice bear the brunt of this battle, is nothing new . . . The new feature is that the people, after the first rise, have not disarmed themselves and surrendered their power into the hands of the republican mountebanks of the ruling classes, that, by the constitution of the *Commune*, they have taken the actual management of their revolution

into their own hands and found at the same time, in the case of success, the means to hold it in the hands of the people itself, displacing the state machinery, the governmental machinery of the ruling class by a governmental machinery of their own (p. 261).

Marx observes that the main features of this new governmental machinery are the abolition of a standing army and its replacement by a people's army; political democracy with revocable delegates instead of representative democracy in its usual form; the absence of special benefits for officials of the government and municipal administrators ("the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages*"); the election of revocable judges; the union of executive and legislative power; and a decentralized democracy, placing decision-making foremost in the hands of small "communes"—or, more precisely, this was the long-range plan (see pp. 209–10).

We can leave it an open question whether all these political innovations are indeed to be praised, as Marx thought. What matters for our purposes is that he saw these political innovations as a crucial step toward economic emancipation. Marx claims that the "true secret" of the Commune was that "[i]t was essentially a working-class government, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor" (p. 212). He maintains that this emancipation was an important aim of the Commune, although its short and besieged life made, of course, only the barest attempts possible in this direction. Mocking the bourgeois critics of the Commune, he writes:

The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilization! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intended to abolish that class property which makes the labor of the many the wealth of the few. It aimed at the expropriation of the expropriators. It wanted to make individual property a truth by transforming the means of production, land and capital, now chiefly the means of enslaving labor, into mere instruments of free and associated labor. But this is communism, 'impossible' communism! (p. 213)⁷

Thus we may see Marx as holding that the Commune could serve as a source of hope for moral progress in that the demand for a socialized mode of production was living among the working class of Paris. Admittedly, he does not explicitly state that this demand is to be interpreted as a *moral* demand, but it is difficult to believe that his own enthusiasm and the enthusiasm he detected among the workers of the Commune was not at least partly a moral enthu-

siasm. In Marx's own words: "Working, thinking, fighting, bleeding Paris—almost forgetful, in its incubation of a new society, of the cannibals at its gates—radiant in the enthusiasm of its historic initiative!" (p. 220). And, in accordance with this, we have seen in Chapter II that Marx, in looking back at the Commune, declared his solidarity and commitment to the socialist cause. Moreover, he uses terms such as 'noble,' 'heroic,' and 'martyrs' to characterize the revolutionaries of Paris—terms which make very clear that he—against himself—saw this struggle as a moral struggle. We may add that, on the basis of the previous analysis of the limits of self-interest in bringing about concerted revolutionary action, we are justified in interpreting the workers' struggle of the Commune as displaying moral features.

As Kant did with regard to the French Revolution, Marx argued that the Commune is a historical event that will not be forgotten: "Working men's Paris," he writes in the closing words of *The Civil War in France*, "will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class" (p. 233). Thus we can see that on Marx's account the Commune has a moral educative function similar to that which Kant ascribed to the French Revolution. It grounds hope, moreover, in an analogous fashion. Marx suggests that we may hope that in the future conditions will again prevail in which the working class and its allies will rise and act on the demand for a socialized mode of production. And, not unlike Kant, Marx maintains that the final realization of the ideal requires "long struggles," a "series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men," and a "heroic resolve" of the working class (*ibid.*, p. 213).⁴⁸ That Marx's hope was not misplaced is illustrated by the Munich Revolution, which took place less than fifty years after the Commune. Again, the call for political democracy went hand in hand with the demand for economic democracy. What makes the Munich Revolution, however, particularly interesting from a Kantian perspective is that its most prominent leader, Kurt Eisner, was a pupil and personal friend of Hermann Cohen.⁴⁹ Eisner's leadership, in word and deed, reflected the Kantian socialist ideal.

We can also find in Marx the economic analogue of the Kantian idea that moral progress develops on the pragmatic level within the dialectic of self-interest. Before examining this approach, however, a few words must be said about what seem to be common misconceptions and mistakes by some Marxists (including Marx) concerning prescriptive morality and its significance. We have noted one such misunderstanding and error in the claim that

prescriptive laws are in some sense alienating, as if there were no distinction to be drawn between heteronomous and autonomous laws. A related problem is that notions such as "duty-versus-interest" are viewed as typical for the "bourgeois individual" and his moral psychology, the practical result of which is that moral conflicts and dilemmas connected with emancipatory praxis are often brushed under the carpet of spontaneous solidarity, collective consciousness, fusion into the group, the ultimate coincidence of proletarian interests and the interest of humanity, and so on.⁵⁰ Not without good reason, Marx emphasized that capitalism creates egoism, competition, and individualism. But, if this is so, endeavors to overcome such "inclinations" through cooperation, solidarity, and even self-sacrifice are *moral* endeavors. Moreover, emancipatory struggles may lead to moral conflicts, as exemplified by the conflict between the duty to support one's family and the duty to join a strike. Such dilemmas and conflicts require moral reflection and, hence, prescriptive rules. A third issue is that Marxist critics of prescriptive morality often maintain that such a morality necessarily implies an abstract negation of the existing state of affairs, a calling for justice and humanity in the historical void. This is, of course, an important aspect of Marx's critique of ethical and utopian socialism. But Kantian socialist ethics as a prescriptive ethics does not deny that the search for mediation between the actual and the ideal is important, nor does it deny that moral praxis should be praxis informed by social, political, and historical knowledge, or that there are material prerequisites for the realization and general acceptance of certain norms and values. What Kantian socialist ethics, however, does stress—and this is a final point—is that the very fact that certain moral values, norms, and feelings arise within the working class or the economic realm does not show anything at all about their validity.⁵¹ To argue otherwise is to fall back on the Hegelian-Marxian error and a priori conviction that the "ought" is inevitably unfolding within "being," that is, that history is the judge and, happily, happens to be on the side of the proletariat. We must first determine and explicate the "ought" and then see whether actuality—historical developments—provides hope for the realization of the "ought." A *critical* morality is *logically* prior to and independent of historical developments, and such a morality is a prescriptive morality.

Taking these points into account, we can now examine the second Marxian approach to the idea of moral progress in the economic sphere. To begin with, we may interpret the passage that

Buchanan cites from the *Manuscripts* to show that Marx may have recognized the motivational significance of in-process benefits as also indicating that certain socialist or communist values and moral feelings arise within the organizations of the workers. The acquired "new need" for society reflects not only the joys of collective action but also the cooperative values and solidarity that emerge within the struggles for economic emancipation. The "brotherhood of man" is anticipated in these struggles, and this anticipation is best seen as a moral anticipation; for there are at the same time opposite factors that must be overcome, such as competition and egoism. Recall, moreover, that the conclusion of *Capital I* (cited on pp. 258–59) permits a similar interpretation. Marx contends here that the development of the means of production by the capitalists makes necessary an increasing cooperation among the workers in the production process. Furthermore, the development of the productive forces shapes an infrastructure which makes possible the organization of the working class, besides providing the skills for collective action. Thus the regulative idea and hope evolve that the foundations for the emancipation of the proletariat emerge within the dialectic of self-interest: the profit motive makes capitalists create an industrial process that brings unity in the factory, and this unity leads to unity among the workers in and outside the factory, a unity based on the moral motive. Initially, the cooperation between the workers in the factory and in their organizations is foremost a cooperation from without, enforced upon them by the necessity to work and survive, but, through continuous struggles and with the inability of capitalism to provide a decent living for all and the increasing socialization of labor, this cooperation becomes a cooperation from within, involving the moral conviction that capitalism must be abolished and replaced by socialism as a society of material well-being and, above all, worker control.

Marx somewhat elaborates this schema of gradual progress by discussing in *Capital I* the emancipatory potential of modern industry. We have seen in the previous chapter that in the *Grundrisse* he predicted that modern technology has emancipatory potential in that it holds the promise of the worker as "watchman and regulator [of] the production process itself." On Marx's account, capitalism obstructs this possible development, making socialism necessary, but he also argues that capitalism simply cannot "permit" itself to continue to reproduce the "detail-worker of today, crippled by life-long repetition of one and the same trivial operation, and thus reduced to the mere fragment of a man" (*Capital I*

p. 488). Holding that the constant revolutionizing of the means of production is the lifeblood of the capitalist, Marx predicts that modern industry will "compel" society to replace the detail-worker "by the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labors, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers" (*ibid.*). Marx says that the beginnings of this development are manifest in his own time, not only in the form of workers who take on different jobs and learn the corresponding technical skills but also in the kind of instruction that children receive in factory schools and other technical schools (see *ibid.*, pp. 483–84 and 487–88). But again, this development cannot fully evolve within the capitalist mode of production, and this very fact constitutes one of its "immanent contradictions" that will bring about its eventual dissolution. Marx does not state here which subjective factors are connected with this particular "immanent contradiction" and its dissolution, but the logic of his argument is that the increasing technical control of the production process by the workers will raise the demand for full autonomy in the workplace, a demand that capitalism cannot satisfy. Besides, education itself is conducive to moral emancipation and thus to the evolution of the demand for a socialized mode of production. And finally, Marx suggests, capitalism in its cruel search for cheap labor cannot help but integrate women into this emancipatory process, making the moral voice for socialism at least twice as strong (see *ibid.*, pp. 489–90).⁵²

A glance at the history of capitalist society of the past century makes clear, I think, that much is to be said for both variants of the reinterpreted Marxian regulative idea concerning progress in the economic realm, although it seems that Marx had too high an expectation of the kind of socialization of labor that capitalist modern industry effects. The call of the workers of the Commune resounded for years throughout the industrial world, and the strength and moral determination of the workers' movement went hand in hand with the centralization and expansion of the means of production. Marx was only one of the many upper-class mid-nineteenth-century critics of the capitalist industrial revolution; but, notwithstanding the distortive Hegelian expectations in his work, he was one of the few who cared to examine this process in thorough fashion and to entrust its fundamental transformation basically to the hands of its victims: the modern working class. The same can be said of Engels, perhaps even more so. Considering its hard-won gains, it would be insensitive and cheap to declare that

the working class has in some sense betrayed this trust and expectation. Nonetheless, it is true that the working class at large has not opted for socialism, and so the question arises what the possible significance is of the Marxian regulative idea concerning progress for our own time.

Present Perspective

Present hope for progress on the economic level can no longer be grounded on the same empirical premises as those of the reinterpreted Marxian regulative idea in both its variants. The voice of the heroic struggle of the working class in the past century is hardly heard today, and the same must be said of the uprisings in the early decades of our century. The changing conditions of the struggle for economic emancipation are a factor that helps to explain this. These conditions are quite different from those of the memorable uprisings of the working class, and for this reason these uprisings may have lost some of their moral appeal. But there is more at stake: historical amnesia is a sign of our time. Our dominant "culture" does not know in any true sense a past and a future; rather, it mirrors and repeats ad nauseam the sociopolitical given. This cultural hegemony must be broken: what was once a source of hope is now primarily a moral task: to recapture the past for the sake of the future.

The changed conditions of the struggle for economic emancipation also indicate that the other variant of the reinterpreted Marxian regulative idea is empirically inadequate for our time. To be sure, the organizations of the working class in the advanced industrial nations often remain threatened in their existence, but the issue is no longer that the mechanisms of capital accumulation promote the emergence of these organizations and that we may hope that the struggle for better material conditions will go hand in hand with the demand for worker control. The greatly improved material conditions of the working class have weakened its revolutionary impulse. Another change is that the struggle of the working class was often centered around a demand that has now been satisfied: the universal right to vote. Accordingly, the present issue has become one of how to steer the organizations of the working class beyond mere economic concerns (although these are important) toward economic democracy and international solidarity. The mechanisms of capital accumulation in our society run, however, counter to the development of international solidarity,

because they create an increasing gap between the material interests of the working class in the rich nations and those of the working class in the developing nations. Add to this the continuous impact of the ideological discrediting of socialism by equating it to the system of present "communist" countries, and it seems that the prospect for a socialist future looks grim indeed.

Yet, despair is not justified. The mechanisms of capital accumulation seem in recent years to move away from work fragmentation and toward workers' input in the management of the workplace, so as to counteract both low workers' morale and low productivity. (Braverman's study, then, may need to be updated in this regard.⁵³) Here we can discern a certain "cunning" along the conceptual lines of the reinterpreted Marxian regulative idea concerning progress: the profit motive may at times unwittingly cooperate with the moral motive—that is, the moral demand for the overcoming of the division of labor and the realization of economic democracy. This demand is manifest in our society, although often in a partial and distorted form, and we may hope that this demand will become stronger once the first steps in the direction of its realization have been taken. (European countries such as Sweden and West Germany are far ahead of the United States in this respect.⁵⁴) Furthermore, similar mechanisms are operative in other developments of the past years: workers who take over corporations that are not sufficiently profitable by the standards of capital accumulation, and workers who receive stocks or a vote in the policies of their companies in lieu of wage raises, in order to help their companies out of an economic slump. Also, demands are being raised to use pension funds for influencing investment policies, and plant relocations are no longer accepted as an unchangeable tragic fact. All these signs of hope are small signs, and it remains to be seen whether they will be truly conducive to international solidarity. Yet, they show that worker control (and thus socialism) is not a dead issue, no matter how hard its adversaries try to convince us otherwise. It is, however, only within a gradualist Kantian schema that these small signs are encouraging; they seem to be insignificant from the perspective of the eschatological expectations raised by the dialectical conception of revolutionary change, which is a schema of despair. Finally, it may be once more noted that, from a Kantian perspective, hope for progress is not a precondition for moral praxis but a facilitation of such praxis. The definitive remedy against despair is moral action itself, not only in the economic realm but in every realm.

4. Summary and Conclusion

My discussion of Marx has exposed a wide variety of conflicting views in his work. The literature on Marx has classified and explicated these conflicting elements in various ways, such as the young versus the old Marx, the humanistic versus the scientific Marx, and the Marx of social democracy versus the Marx of revolutionary communism. The writings of Habermas add a similar distinction to this list: there is the Marx who sees natural science as the paradigm of all sciences and labor as the central anthropological category, and there is the Marx who develops a critical social science and deals with interaction as an additional fundamental anthropological category. Habermas, however, also offers the important insight that this distinction parallels Marx's philosophical self-understanding and his practice of inquiry. Using this distinction, while holding that the more basic tension in Marx is between the Hegelian Marx and the Kantian Marx, I can recapitulate my previous discussion and come to my final conclusion.

Kantian socialist ethics and Marx have in many respects a shared evaluative perspective. They project essentially a similar social ideal, which, in summary, may be described as a cooperative society of legislators or autonomous beings, and they both launch their critique of capitalist society from this evaluative perspective. Once the question is raised, however, what the role is of such a critique and evaluative perspective, crucial differences develop between the two views. Marx contends that morality in its various functions is irrelevant for the struggle toward the socialist/communist ideal, whereas Kantian socialist ethics sets forth this struggle as a moral task. Marx's denial of morality is an aspect of his reductionism as embedded in his materialist conception of history, but what is particularly important to note is that this conception of history contains a clear Hegelian dogmatic metaphysical core in that the "ought" is seen as inevitably unfolding within "being." I have argued that this view of immanent progress conflicts with critical morality, that it leads to moral insensitivity with respect to human suffering in the past and present, and that it invites repressive action in the name of the allegedly inevitable road toward the good. Moreover, since the unfolding of communism is seen as a dialectical process, it legitimates revolutionary violence *a priori* and raises unrealistic expectations concerning the effects of revolution. Yet, we have also seen that Marx's work dis-

plays another dimension: the dogmatic metaphysical Hegelian claim concerning the inevitable collapse of capitalism and the emergence of socialism may be interpreted as a regulative idea on a par with Kant's regulative idea about intelligent devils opting for the perfect state. This interpretation is justified in the light of the Kantian primacy of praxis in Marx's writings (a primacy which conflicts with his reductionism and the materialist conception of history insofar as it is an instance of dogmatic metaphysics), and additionally in that the practical effect of his writings often has been to support such a regulative hope. My discussion of the public-goods objection has shown that this regulative idea is inadequate, and thus I have once again affirmed that morality is indispensable for socialist theory and praxis. Last, we have briefly noted that a morally adequate and gradualist regulative idea concerning moral progress on the economic level can be extracted from Marx's work. This idea is no longer empirically adequate for our time, but it is still conceptually adequate and invites new efforts in the same direction.

My thesis is that the Hegelian view of morality and historical development shapes Marx's philosophical self-understanding, whereas, in the practice of inquiry—that is, in his empirical and historical studies, when Marx does not reflect upon the philosophical premises of his work—Kantian elements such as a regulative understanding of historical progress and a recognition of the importance of morality for social action toward the good society come into the picture as well. This means that in order that the Marxian *corpus* may be able to serve as a suitable *moral* basis for socialist theory and praxis, it must replace a Hegelian philosophical self-understanding with a Kantian practical philosophy. Thus a philosophical foundation will be created for the Marxian evaluative perspective, and there is then the opportunity to make required improvements with regard to this perspective. And, of course, the negative ramifications of the Hegelian notion of history and morality will be avoided. Moreover, my thesis implies that Marx's practice of inquiry still has merits for present socialist theory and praxis, provided that the ("repressed") Kantian elements are elaborated, stressed, and applied to our own time. Or, to put it otherwise, what must be given up is not so much the materialist conception of history as its reductionism and its dogmatic metaphysical aspects. What is required is a Kantianization of Marx's writings. But this is, in effect, just another way of saying that socialist theory and praxis stand to gain from taking seriously the

Kantian socialist moral program. Irrespective of what Kantian socialist ethics may mean to Marx's social theory, however, I hope that this study has shown that the union of Kantian ethics and socialism is a promising one. The voices of those who labored around the turn of the century in this spirit still deserve to be heard.

APPENDIX

A Historical Note on Kantian Ethical Socialism

In an introductory note to Karl Vorländer's "Die neukantische Bewegung im Sozialismus" (1902), the editors of *Kant-Studien* wrote: "The neo-Kantian movement in socialism has gained in the past few years such a significance that the editors of *Kant-Studien* feel obliged to keep their readers informed about this movement. The editors have therefore requested Dr. Vorländer, who is most familiar with this movement, to report on it in an objective manner" (p. 23n.). The editors had chosen well; for Vorländer may be described as the early historian of Kantian socialism as well as its main popularizer (in a nonpejorative sense of that word). The editors also correctly observed that Kantianism had made some impact on the German socialist movement: Conrad Schmidt, a member of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) had argued in 1897 that Kant's epistemology could function as a corrective of "Hegel's poetic metaphysics" and thus provide a more adequate epistemic framework for Marx's social theory.¹ Schmidt's polemical thesis drew a vehement response by the Russian Marxist George Plekhanov. The main impetus behind the debate on the significance of Kant's philosophy for socialist theory and praxis was, however, the influence of Eduard Bernstein, leader and theoretician of the revisionist faction in the SPD. In 1899 Bernstein evoked the critical spirit of Kant against the "Cant" of orthodox Marxism,

with its belief in the inevitable collapse of capitalism.² The debate soon took a broader turn, to include the question of the socialist importance of Kant's ethics, and led to a series of papers, many of which were published in the SPD organs *Die neue Zeit* and *Sozialistische Monatshefte*.³ Franz Mehring defended the traditional Marxist view that Marxism does not need a critical ethics and that Kant's ethics is a philosophy of reconciliation, weakening the class struggle. The Kantian viewpoint was represented by Franz Staudinger and Ludwig Woltmann. Others who joined the debate were Karl Kautsky on the side of the Marxian orthodoxy and Kurt Eisner and Vorländer himself on the side of Kantian socialist ethics.

A glance at Vorländer's report for *Kant-Studien* makes clear, however, that the development of Kantians becoming socialists or socialists adopting Kantian elements in their theoretical work was not limited to Germany: Vorländer points out that Kantianism influenced various French and Russian socialists, such as Jean Jaurès, Charles Rappoport, Nikolay Berdyayev, and Peter Struve. Turning to Vorländer's *Kant und Marx* (1911), we find an even broader picture emerging: Kantianism also influenced some Austrian and Italian socialists, such as Max Adler and Alfredo Poggi. Nonetheless, it seems to correct to say—and this presumably accords with Vorländer's view—that the link between Kant and socialism was most closely and systematically made by Hermann Cohen and the Marburg School, including such "members" as Eisner, Albert Görland, Paul Natorp, Staudinger, and Vorländer. This is certainly so if we take as our concern a Kantianism that functions not just as an epistemic corrective of Marx's social theory but also as a source of socialist values and moral guidelines—that is, a Kantian ethical socialism.

Early Austro-Marxism, as represented by Max Adler and Otto Bauer, may seem to be a noteworthy exception to this contention. And, indeed, both Adler and Bauer held in the early 1900's that Kantian ethics offered a necessary moral justification for socialism. Yet, their intellectual labor was not focused on expounding this idea, as was that of some Marburgers. Adler was interested mostly in using Kant's epistemology to establish a transcendental foundation of Marx's social theory; Bauer's work was centered around the growing problem of nationalism. Moreover, they both came to reject Kantian ethical socialism. Adler, although still believing in the importance of an epistemological synthesis of Kant and Marx, claimed in the early 1920's that, even though the Marburg School was not wrong in holding that Kant's practical philosophy offers

a justification for socialism, Marxism as a social science simply does not need such a justification; for it explains on the basis of "formal-teleological causality" how "socialized man" necessarily comes "to realize what he considers to be morally justified." Thus Adler concluded that "[i]f the idealism of Kant and his followers was the philosophy of the conceptual possibility of socialism, the scientific socialism of Marx becomes the theory of the actual reality of idealism."⁴ Bauer was less charitable. Echoing the early orthodox SPD critics of the Marburg School, he wrote in an essay on the history of Austro-Marxism (1938) that the "bourgeois intelligentsia" and their Kantianism "aimed to win over the working class, to pacify the socialist movement, and eliminate its revolutionary character. . . . [They sought to undermine] Marx's theory of the historical inevitability of social revolution . . . , and socialism was reduced to an ethical postulate, a simple maxim for value-judgments and action within the existing social order." And, Bauer added, this "bourgeois criticism of Marx" was elaborated "at a new level of sophistication" in Bernstein's revisionist thought as well as in the works of such Kantians as Eisner and Staudinger.⁵

The various members of the Marburg School displayed different philosophical interests, religious commitments, and attitudes toward revolution, the SPD, and revisionism. What tied them together, besides Cohen's personality, was that they all took Cohen's Kant interpretation as their point of departure, stressing the transcendental method and rejecting any physiological or psychological understanding of Kant's epistemology.⁶ Also, they all agreed that the *personality principle*, i.e., the third formulation of the categorical imperative, sets forth the idea of socialism, and that a tenable socialism needs such a moral underpinning. It will suffice here to say a few words about three key figures: Friedrich Albert Lange as the forefather of Marburg socialism; Vorländer and his attempt to synthesize Kant and Marx; and Eisner's efforts to bring the Kantian ideal into practice in the Munich Revolution. My remarks on Cohen will be largely in passing, for his work has received ample attention in the text. I will also make some (additional) synoptic comments on the Kant discussion in the SPD and on the link between Marburg socialism and the revisionism of Bernstein.

Lange and the Marburg School

The indebtedness of the Marburg School to Lange is both personal and programmatic in nature. Lange (1828–75) became full pro-

fessor at Marburg in 1873 and that same year arranged a position for Cohen as *Privatdozent* (university lecturer) at Marburg. He did this partly due to the fact that he had read Cohen's *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* (1871), acknowledging its influence on his own understanding of Kant's epistemology in the second edition of his classic *History of Materialism*.⁷ [Lange's book was widely read among socialists. It was in his Epilogue to the fifth edition of this work (1896) that Cohen for the first time *systematically* expounded his thesis that socialism is to be morally grounded in Kant.⁸] Cohen reminisced about his first meeting with Lange in these words: "Following his noble nature he directly wished to draw out an open-hearted statement about the religious issue that separated us. 'Are our views different with regard to Christianity?' No, I said: What you call Christianity I call prophetic Judaism. And immediately a close understanding arose between us. 'Yes, I can also show you passages of the prophets that I have underlined.' Thus ethical socialism had at once overcome the barriers of our religions."⁹ This enlightened attitude was a rare exception in Wilhelminian Germany; for, although it was not too hard for Jews to obtain academic posts, the climb up the academic ladder was extremely difficult, if not impossible, without conversion. It was Lange's untimely death and his emphatic request for Cohen to become his successor that freed Cohen from this arduous academic road: Cohen became full professor in 1876 and expressed throughout his life his personal gratitude to Lange. History, however, did not repeat itself; for in 1912 Cohen's wish to make his distinguished student Ernst Cassirer his successor was sidestepped.¹⁰

There are some important differences between Lange and the Marburgers. They agreed with Lange's rejection of metaphysical materialism as set forth in his *History of Materialism*, but they were critical of his rebuttal insofar as it was based on a psychological interpretation of Kant. (Lange saw the a priori categories as constituents of the human mind rather than as rational or logical constructs.) Moreover, Lange can hardly be called a Kantian socialist, even though he was an ethical socialist. To be sure, Lange did not fail to mention some strengths of Kant's ethics and accepted some of its aspects, but he was also rather negative about it, declaring it to be the "transitory part of the Kantian philosophy." Thus Vorländer came to state: "[T]he connection between [Lange's] 'Kantianism' and his 'socialism' is not a systematic one; it consists rather in his noble personality filled with pure ethical idealism."¹¹ Besides this inspirational link, however, there are also some

programmatic affinities between Lange and the socialism of the Marburg School. Like the Marburgers, Lange was a gradualist, believing in the possibility of incremental improvement in the conditions of the German working class. In this vein he started a consumer cooperative in Duisburg in 1862, hoping that this type of cooperative would be a first step toward the producer cooperative, and a few years later he opened his own publishing house, printing cheap pamphlets and a newspaper directed toward the working class.¹² But what is most interesting is that Lange did not make the common socialist mistake of focusing attention primarily on industrial workers as the agents of social change: he made a plea for state credits and other forms of support not only for industrial cooperatives but also for agrarian cooperatives. More radically, Lange called for a redistribution of the land of the Junkers.¹³ Here, then, we can discern an additional influence of Lange's thought on Cohen (and the Marburg School), in that they both envisioned the ideal society as an association of cooperatives. Presumably, Lange was more reformist-oriented than at least Cohen was and also more doubtful concerning the possible emancipatory effects of state programs (emphasizing instead "self-help"¹⁴); yet, they also shared the belief that a true socialism is a democratic socialism and that the struggle for the emancipation of labor should be linked to the struggle for political emancipation. Accordingly, the ultimate significance of Lange for the Marburg School must be sought in the fact that he contributed to shaping its social agenda.

Vorländer and His Kant-Marx Synthesis

Vorländer (1860–1928), a Marburg native, studied under Cohen and wrote his dissertation on Kant. Vorländer was primarily interested in Kant's practical philosophy and emphasized aspects of Kant's work which have been all too often neglected, such as his philosophy of history, his commitment to the French Revolution and other liberal revolutions, and, in general, the social nature of his ethics. He was also a distinguished biographer of Kant. Quite early in his intellectual career Vorländer made the step from Kant to socialism, which explains why, despite an impressive publication record, including studies on Goethe, Marx, and Schiller, and a two-volume work on the history of philosophy, he remained a Gymnasium teacher until 1919, when the more liberal climate made it at last possible for him to obtain a university post at Münster.¹⁵ The repressive political climate of Wilhelmian Germany also explains why Vorländer, against his own expressed desire, did not join the

organized socialist struggle until 1919: civil servants were not legally permitted to become SPD members.¹⁶

Vorländer's Kant-Marx synthesis is often misunderstood: he argues not that Kantian ethics and Marx's social theory are in fact compatible, but that they can be *made* complementary, forming together a philosophy of socialism. To see this point, we must turn briefly to the long systematic conclusion that Vorländer added to the second edition of *Kant und Marx* (1926). Under the heading, "What Do We Keep from Historical Materialism?," Vorländer seeks first to eliminate possible misunderstandings concerning this conception of history: historical materialism should not be equated with a mechanical or metaphysical materialism; for intellectual lifeforms are "conditioned" but not "produced" by economic (material) relations, and these relations, in turn, reflect intentional human action.¹⁷ Moreover, as the later Engels stressed, interaction takes place between the superstructure and the economic basis of society.¹⁸ What is most important, however, is that the materialist conception of history should be seen not as a "dogma" but as a "guideline" for the scientific study of society and its evolution (*Kant und Marx*, 2nd ed., p. 319). Vorländer then goes on to argue that Marx and Engels did not think historical materialism through philosophically as a "research hypothesis," since they tended to reduce philosophy to "genetic-causal deduction" (*ibid.*, p. 321). The source of this mistake is to be found in Hegel: "[Marx] and his friend Engels were philosophically still strongly under the influence of Hegel, whose genetic method is fruitful in itself but sets aside the eternal distinction between *being* and *ought* Thus they both placed in their theory 'the jump from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom' . . . in the future" (*ibid.*, p. 322). And, Vorländer writes a little further on, their mistaken claim that the proletariat "has no ideals to realize" has a similar root: Marx and Engels followed, in effect, Hegel's self-conscious attack on Kant's view of ethics (*ibid.*, p. 325).

In short, then, the main drift of Vorländer's view is that a Kant-Marx synthesis is possible once the materialist conception of history is freed from what I have described in Chapter VII as its reductionism and its dogmatic metaphysical underpinning. And, of course, Vorländer contends that this synthesis presupposes that Kant's ethics be further developed as a Kantian socialist ethics. Furthermore, Vorländer argues that, once historical materialism is interpreted as a "research hypothesis," it is an open question which epistemology or philosophy of science will fit best with this conception of history, because Marx and Engels never (fully) de-

veloped such a philosophical foundation. Referring to the work of Max Adler, Vorländer suggests that a Kantian epistemology may be adequate to the task, but it is clear that this is not his main concern (see *ibid.*, p. 335). Thus Vorländer arrives at his final conclusion that a philosophy of socialism must fulfill two tasks: first, "it must not be satisfied with utopian dreams that are merely created in the head, as happened in previous centuries, but it must go hand in hand with a secure method of exploring the economic and historical development of the social order of things. Marxism has in this respect made an essential contribution. . . ." And second, as a "socialism of praxis [*Tat*], it "must raise the question: What is the end-goal that socialism must seek . . . ? Only a philosophy of *ought*, i.e., ethics, can answer this question. Engels's 'jump into freedom' . . . cannot be postponed to an undetermined future but must already start in the present, in the economy, law, and education" (*ibid.*, pp. 347–48).

Although Vorländer emphasized that a philosophy of socialism must be open-ended and subject to continuous improvement, explicitly rejecting Bolshevism as a "closed" system (see *ibid.*, p. 347), he obviously hoped that his Kant-Marx synthesis—his main intellectual life-task—constituted an important contribution to the formation of an adequate philosophy of socialism. In my view, this hope was (and is) justified. Admittedly, Vorländer did not sufficiently explore the Hegelian elements in Marx, but this is understandable in light of what he sought to show, namely that Marx's social theory as an empirical theory is important to a tenable philosophy of socialism. It is, moreover, this same endeavor to separate good science from bad metaphysics in Marx—so that a critical Kantian ethics could be put in the latter's place—which helps to account for the fact that Vorländer at times suggests that our evaluation and interpretation of the world are two completely independent processes. He states, for example, that "the view of Marxists is basically purely directed toward explanation, and not toward the evaluation of . . . what is happening. From this angle it must reject any meddling of moral viewpoints in its pure theoretical sphere" (*ibid.*, p. 330; cf. p. 322). To say the least, this statement is misleading; for Marxism as a critical social science must be guided in its theory formation by the socialist ideal, although such an evaluative perspective must be set aside in the testing of hypotheses. This is implied by Kant's primacy of praxis, and Cohen's notion that the scientist must seek the 'truth' as the unification of causal and moral laws points in the same direction (see Chapter VI, section 3, above).

Bernstein and the Kant Discussion in the SPD

Vorländer, after learning of Bernstein's interest in Kant, began to correspond with Bernstein, sending him papers by the Marburgers and recommending literature on Kant.¹⁹ Vorländer's rationale for taking on this role of mentor is that he hoped that Bernstein would thus come to give more content to his professed "Kantianism." Bernstein's call "Back to Kant" was primarily a call for adopting a healthy critical attitude toward some unquestioned beliefs ("Cant") embedded in the Erfurt Program (1891) of the SPD, such as the increasing concentration of capital, the intensification of economic crises, the growing class polarization, and the inevitability of the socialist revolution. Thus Bernstein writes in *Evolutionary Socialism* that "social democracy require[s] a Kant who should judge the received opinion and examine it critically. . . . Such a thinker, who with convincing exactness could show what is worthy and destined to live in the work of our great champions, and what must and can perish, would also make it possible for us to hold a more unbiased judgment on those works which, although not starting from premises which to-day appear to us as decisive, yet are devoted to the ends for which social democracy is fighting" (p. 223). And, in apparent reference to the fact that the orthodox Marxists of the SPD were not prepared to give up the revolutionary road outlined in the Erfurt Program, although the party was increasingly engaged in reformist and parliamentary politics, Bernstein adds that "[n]o impartial thinker will deny that socialist criticism often fails in [displaying a critical Kantian spirit] and discloses all the dark sides of epigonism."

It was only secondarily that Bernstein appealed to Kant as an antidote to dogmatic historical materialism with its reductionism and its denial that the socialist ideal sets a moral task. Notwithstanding Vorländer's efforts, however, these issues hardly receive a Kantian explication in Bernstein's work. Most significantly, Bernstein's understanding of ethics is decisively un-Kantian, in that he held that morality cannot be based on a systematic and rational foundation. Also, his view of the moral ideal is not Kantian; for he stressed happiness rather than autonomy as its essential feature.²⁰ Peter Gay in his excellent intellectual biography of Bernstein rightly concludes then that "in spite of some superficial resemblances to the Critical Philosophy, Bernstein was never a Kantian. [H]e never followed through Kant's speculations in the realms of knowledge and ethics. . . . He called on Kant, but he remained a common-sense philosopher."²¹ And we may note in support of this

conclusion that Bernstein claims in *Evolutionary Socialism* that the call "Back to Kant" may be translated as "Back to Lange," because in Lange we can find the "union . . . of an upright and intrepid championship of the struggles of the working class for emancipation with a large scientific freedom from prejudice which was always ready to acknowledge mistakes and recognize new truths" (pp. 223–24).

Bernstein's common-sense philosophy constitutes both a strength and a weakness of his work. On the one hand, his rather straightforward orientation toward the "facts" enabled him, notwithstanding his deep personal immersion in orthodox Marxism, to question critically some of its dogmatic beliefs.²² Unlike most orthodox Marxists, Bernstein had the courage to face the growing prosperity of the German working class in the 1890s and to think through the increasingly evolutionary politics of the SPD. On the other hand, Bernstein tended to take the "facts" too much at their face value, projecting the economic improvement of the 1890s toward the future and overestimating the capacity of capitalism to overcome its economic irrationalities, such as its recurrent economic crises.²³ The result is that Bernstein at times sketched too rosy a picture of the future, describing a unilinear model of progress in which class antagonisms would slowly diminish in capitalist society, while socialism would gradually and peacefully evolve through reformist and parliamentary action.²⁴ Here his thought again takes a somewhat un-Kantian turn; for the Kantian notion of progress fully incorporates the possibility of temporary regress. In Bernstein's defense, however, it is to be noted that he did not reject revolution as such. Rather, he follows Kantian gradualism in criticizing the Hegelian conception of the socialist revolution as the negation of the negation, leading to an a priori justification of revolutionary violence as well as to eschatological expectations concerning the effects of revolution. As Bernstein put it, this "vision" of "social collapse . . . is the picture of an army. It presses forward, through detours, over sticks and stones, but is constantly led downward in its march ahead. Finally it arrives at a great abyss. Beyond it there stands beckoning the desired goal—the state of the future, which can be reached only through a sea; a *red* sea, as some have said."²⁵

In general, Kantian socialist ethics shares Bernstein's moral concern with the means of social change. His view, for example, that a political mass strike, paralyzing the economy, is justified as a means of defending democratic rights or of pressing for such rights, is Kantian in nature; for the very conditions of autonomy

are at stake, and, once these conditions are threatened, action that may lead to revolution is justified.²⁶ Also, the Marburgers could not but have agreed with Bernstein's contention that democracy is both the means and the end of socialism.²⁷ And, like the Marburgers, Bernstein stressed the importance of cooperatives, both as an instrument for the emancipation of the working class and as an essential aspect of the socialist ideal.²⁸ Last, Bernstein's (infamous) slogan that "the ultimate aim of socialism is nothing, but the movement is everything" accords with the Kantian socialist viewpoint, at least in the two dominant meanings Bernstein gives to this slogan: incremental changes are significant in themselves and must not be seen as mere preparatory steps toward the final collapse of capitalist society (the "great abyss"), as the orthodox Marxists in effect contended; and the socialist ideal must be viewed as open-ended, in that continuous theoretical and practical learning processes will shape its detailed character.²⁹ We may, moreover, give two further Kantian twists to Bernstein's slogan: the end must follow from the means, rather than vice versa; and the moral ideal sets an infinite task. In sum, Bernstein was in a sense correct in maintaining that his "Back to Kant" could be translated as "Back to Lange"; for his relation to Marburg socialism is similar to that between Marburg socialism and Lange: they share significant programmatic points, but clearly differ in their philosophical underpinning of these points.

Bernstein's revisionism was definitely rejected at the 1903 Dresden congress of the SPD, although the revisionists were allowed to remain within the party. The party once again affirmed its revolutionary character and predicted ever-growing class conflict and struggle. This had, however, little effect: the reformists within the party, and notably the representatives of the trade unions with their economic orientation, became stronger, and the party increasingly took a turn which conflicted not only with the orthodox Marxist view but also with Bernstein's revisionism. The trade unions succeeded, for example, in 1906 to eliminate in effect the political mass strike from the SPD agenda, in opposition to Bernstein, Kautsky, and the Marxist party leader August Bebel.³⁰ Likewise, Bernstein soon joined such Marxists as Kautsky and Karl Liebknecht in their opposition to the SPD support of the Great War. And, during the 1920s and early 1930s, Bernstein was a critic not only of Bolshevism but also of the increasing right-wing turn of the SPD and the Weimar Republic. His voice was not heard. Yet, in the year of his death (1932), the 82-year old Bernstein wrote to Kautsky: "You are right, we can only wish each other the strength

to get through these miserable times without harm. What will be the outcome? Will that which we have worked for so passionately all our lives be preserved? We, as old fighters, cannot take such thoughts lightly in view of the serious situation. . . . Meanwhile I have full confidence in the energy of our party; it will carry on. . . ."³¹ Bernstein did not live to see his heroic hope fatefully crushed: he died a few months before the last trace of democracy was eliminated in Germany in early 1933.

With the rejection of revisionism at the Dresden congress the debate on Kantian ethics and its significance for socialism gradually receded. In philosophical terms, the criticisms raised against the Kantian position were not of a high level.³² We have examined in Chapters VI and VII two main points of criticism that Kautsky launched in *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*: the personality principle is as consistent with liberalism or anarchism as it is with socialism, and will be superfluous in the socialist society. Mehring, the earlier critic of Marburg socialism, also set forth the first objection. After citing Cohen's view that Kant "is the true and real originator of German socialism," Mehring wrote: "He [Kant] has not contributed a grain of sand to the foundation of socialism, but he has contributed many a stone to liberalism and in particular to an anti-socialist liberalism." Mehring added: "Have these liberals or the neo-Kantians misunderstood their Kant?"³³ Now, obviously, Mehring is correct in observing that Kant's practical philosophy has been used to support various forms of liberalism—Mehring never tires of pointing out that Kant accepted capitalism and made the workers into passive citizens³⁴—but this is irrelevant; for the real issue is whether socialism can be logically and cogently derived from Kant's ethics. Both Mehring and Kautsky failed to address this issue systematically. Mehring's view somewhat differed from Kautsky's with regard to the latter's second point of criticism. Notwithstanding his contention that Kant is essentially a philosopher of liberalism, Mehring argued that the personality principle corresponds to Marx's description in the *Manifesto* of the communist society as "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."³⁵ Instead of drawing the conclusion, however, that this means that Marxism needs a critical ethics, Mehring saw it as an indication of the completeness of Marxism.³⁶ Moreover, on Mehring's account, the ideal must be viewed not as a moral task but rather as the inevitable product of the laws of history. But on these terms Kautsky was also prepared to call the socialist ideal a moral ideal, although he additionally attempted to undercut the

need for a critical morality by turning to “social instincts” as the determinants of human behavior.³⁷ The upshot is that the main bone of contention between the Marburgers and the orthodox Marxists of the SPD still stood: only the former held that morality in its corrective, directive, and motivational functions is indispensable for socialist theory and praxis.

A final major criticism against Kantian ethical socialism is more tactical than strictly philosophical in nature: Kant’s ethics weakens the revolutionary impulse of the proletariat. Both Kautsky and Mehring raise this objection, Mehring less emphatically, for he maintained that the neo-Kantians were of “good will” and that “some of them stood close to socialism.”³⁸ Kautsky writes in *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*: “Despite the categorical imperative, which the Kantian Ethic cries [out] to the individual, its historical and social tendency, from the very beginning on till today, has been that of toning down, of reconciling the antagonisms, not of overcoming them through struggle” (p. 69). To some extent, Kautsky’s claim is correct: the Marburgers believed that reformatory labor and cooperation with progressive liberals was the right tactic around the turn of the century. Most orthodox Marxists, however, basically agreed with this, although their revolutionary program formed an obstacle to such cooperation and gave a different meaning to reformatory steps, as steps toward the final collapse of capitalism. (Another problem was that German liberalism only slowly gave up its anti-working class orientation.) The Marburgers, then, established a more convincing link between theory and praxis than the SPD orthodox did. Contra Kautsky and Mehring, moreover, the issue of revolution was for the Marburgers not a question of dogma but a moral and empirical question. True, some of them may have held the view that revolution can never be morally justified, but this was not the general view. We have seen that Cohen held that revolutions constitute “periods of experimental ethics”; and one of the Marburgers played a leading role in one such practical experiment: Eisner was prime minister of the Bavarian Republic from November 1918 until February 1919.

Eisner and the Munich Revolution

Eisner (1867–1919) was above all a journalist. At the age of twenty-two he broke off his study at the Friedrich Wilhelm University at Berlin and accepted a position at a Berlin news agency.³⁹ In 1892 Eisner worked at the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and finished a critical study of Nietzsche. (Nietzsche was second only to Hegel as the main target of the philosophical polemic of the Marburg School.)

From 1893 to 1897 Eisner was a political editor at the *Hessische Landeszeitung* in Marburg; during this period, under the influence of Cohen, he began to define his socialism as a Kantian ethical socialism. Eisner renewed his Kant studies (started earlier at Berlin), followed lectures by Cohen, and became personally acquainted with Cohen and other Marburgers. He later wrote that Cohen's ethical socialism touched him at the core of his being.⁴⁰ Indeed, Cohen's impact is clearly manifest in a series of articles that Eisner wrote in 1904 for *Vorwärts* on the occasion of the centennial of Kant's death. Eisner argued here that the categorical imperative as the "eternal principle of morality" cannot be completely realized in any social order (i.e., morality sets an infinite task), but that this imperative presently demands socialism. Such a moral demand is, moreover, essential; for, Eisner noted, "[t]he proletariat seeks not only to understand history but also to shape it." Thus Eisner followed Vorländer in claiming that a philosophy of praxis must combine Kantian ethics and Marxian socioeconomic analysis. And, finally, in his typical polemical fashion Eisner wrote: "More idealism—that is the rousing cry of today—more idealism, and this means—Kautsky don't turn pale—more 'ethics.'"⁴¹

Eisner's combative spirit landed him in jail in 1897: he was sentenced to a nine-month prison term for indirectly referring to the politics of the Kaiser as "Caesarean madness." His case caught the attention of Wilhelm Liebknecht, one of the originators of the organized socialist movement in Germany and the leading editor of the largest SPD newspaper *Vorwärts*. (In 1906 *Vorwärts* had a circulation of 112,000.⁴²) Liebknecht arranged a position for Eisner on the editorial board of *Vorwärts*, and within a year Eisner became its new leading editor. His position was difficult, for one of his tasks was to mediate between the revisionist and orthodox Marxist factions on the editorial board of the paper. Eisner had his disagreements with both groups. He did not share Bernstein's belief that the class struggle would gradually become less sharp, but, in opposition to the orthodox Marxists, he viewed this struggle as a moral struggle. (Bernstein's belief was based on the claim that the middle class was not disappearing and would come to cooperate with the working class. He held the economic condition of the workers was improving, but accepted the relative-immiseration thesis.) Ultimately, Eisner's mediation efforts failed: the orthodox Marxists led by Kautsky forced him to resign in 1905.⁴³ His "crime" was independence of mind. After serving a few years as political columnist for the socialist newspaper *Fränkische Tagespost* in Nuremberg, in 1910 Eisner moved to his final home, Munich.

Eisner started here as a free-lance writer, but he soon became a political editor and literary critic of the SPD newspaper the *Münchener Post*. In 1915 he was dismissed as editor because of his opposition to Germany's role in the Great War.

Like Bernstein, Eisner had at first spontaneously supported Germany's declaration of war, but, even sooner than Bernstein, Eisner became one of the leading and sharpest critics of the German war machine and its annexationist policies. Former opponents became fellow travelers for the cause of peace: Bernstein, Eisner, and Kautsky were leading members of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USDP), which was founded in 1917 in opposition to the SPD support of the war. Eisner became *de facto* head of the USDP organization in Munich and, in this role, became the force behind a mass strike for peace in Munich, which under USDP leadership also took place in other industrial centers in January 1918. Eisner's successful personal call for the strike in several Bavarian war industries led to his second prison term. On the eve of the strike he was arrested, and he spent until mid-October, 1918, in prison. A few weeks later, on November 7, Eisner and the USDP turned a massive peace demonstration into a bloodless coup, effectively using the breakdown of the existing power structure to create the Bavarian Republic.

The Munich Revolution in its first phase (i.e., during the leadership of Eisner) was primarily a political and democratic revolution. Councils of soldiers, peasants, intellectual and manual workers were formed, but the socialization of the means of production was postponed to a later date. Eisner declared in the name of the interim revolutionary regime: "[I]t seems to us impossible, at a time when the productive power of the land is nearly exhausted, to transfer industry immediately to the possession of society. There can be no socialization when there is scarcely anything to be socialized."⁴⁴ Thus the strategy was gradually to bring about the socialization of the means of production through improving the economic position of the workers and strengthening the councils. Above all, the interim revolutionary regime saw as its first duties to make Bavaria an effective democracy and to pressure the newly formed federal government in Berlin to distance itself from the old military hierarchy so that peace could become a preparation for socialism rather than for another war. Or, more precisely, these were the goals that Eisner had set for himself. A brief description of Eisner's heroic attempt to realize these goals in a climate of severe opposition displays Kantian ethical socialism in practice.

Although the SPD had not supported the overthrow of the Bavarian monarchy, it accepted the new state of affairs and joined the interim revolutionary regime. From the very beginning, however, the SPD opposed the idea of placing any real power in the hands of the revolutionary councils, which was the policy of the USDP. The Bavarian SPD leadership largely embraced the existing bureaucracy and held in effect that parliamentarianism was the only legitimate expression of democracy. The conflict between the SPD, on the one hand, and the USDP and other radical groups, such as the newly formed German Communist Party (KPD), on the other hand, came to a final breaking point after the election of the Bavarian parliament in January 1919. The new constitution had greatly broadened the electorate, lowering the voting age from twenty-five to twenty-one and giving suffrage to women. The election results were disastrous for Eisner and the USDP: the bulk of the votes went to the SPD and the conservative Bavarian People's Party (BVP). This result was not altogether surprising; for the SPD had a well-organized party machinery, which the USDP lacked, and the BVP was supported by the traditional Catholic Bavarian peasants. Yet, the election day must have been one of the most painful days of Eisner's life, posing a clear conflict between his democratic and his revolutionary-socialist convictions. Eisner sought the compromise of recognizing the Bavarian parliament, while also retaining the council system as an instrument of the emancipation of labor. He was desperately aware that without such a compromise the outcome could be civil war, but his mediating efforts between conservative and radical socialists were of no avail. The day before Eisner planned to offer his resignation and that of his revolutionary cabinet, placing legislative power in the hands of the Bavarian parliament, he spoke to the congress of councils, envisaging a "second [permanent] revolution": "The second revolution will not be plundering and street-fighting. The new revolution is the assembling of the masses in city and countryside to carry out what the first revolution has started. . . . The bourgeois majority is now to implement bourgeois policies. We will see whether they are capable of ruling. In the meantime the councils should do their job: to build the new democracy. Then perhaps the new spirit will also arrive in Bavaria."⁴⁵ Indeed, the second revolution happened soon, and its fate was what Eisner had feared but denied in his ethical hope. On the day of his intended resignation, February 21, Eisner was murdered, and after another interim revolutionary regime of the SPD and the USDP, a council republic was

set up, the Soviet Republic of Bavaria. In early May it was brutally put down by the federal SPD government, with the support of the Bavarian SPD and the protofascist Free Corps.

Eisner's peace efforts also failed. Two examples suffice to make this clear. In late November 1918, Eisner made public some official documents that showed that Germany had done little to avert Austrian aggression toward Serbia. Eisner's direct aim was to pressure the federal government to dismiss the representatives of the old order in the foreign office and the armistice committee, in the hope that this would contribute to more promising peace terms with the Allied forces. But we may assume that Eisner's broader goal was psychological and moral: an honest public examination of the past was crucial for opening the road toward a peaceful and democratic-socialist future. Berlin, however, ignored the documents, and the general public reaction was disbelief. The second example concerns Eisner's speech at the congress of the Socialist International in Bern, early February, 1919. Here Eisner claimed German war guilt, attacked the militarism of imperial Germany, called for international socialist support for the "new" Germany, and proposed that German workers and students voluntarily engage in reconstruction work in northern France.⁴⁶ The delegates at the congress, with the exception of most German socialists, enthusiastically received Eisner's speech. The public response in Germany was one of strong disapproval, if not outright hatred. It is no coincidence that Eisner was murdered by a fanatical nationalist. Eisner represented everything that the Nazis came to hate: Jew, pacifist, cosmopolite, and socialist.

Although it would be a mistake to place the revolutionaries of the Soviet Republic of Bavaria on a par with those of the KPD in the 1920's and the early 1930's, it can nonetheless be said that the events surrounding and following Eisner's death presaged Germany's greatest tragedy: the bitter conflict within the left contributed to the emergence and victory of the fascist right. It is not, however, my intention to claim that Kantian ethical socialism, if it had been more influential, could have prevented this tragedy. Such counterfactual claims are either truisms or at best oversimplifications. Instead, I hope that this historical note on Kantian ethical socialism has shown at least two things. First, it is misguided to equate Kantian ethical socialism with past or present mainstream social democracy, i.e., a socialism that no longer really seeks to challenge the core and foundation of the capitalist given. This equation may contain a grain of truth with regard to some Kantian

ethical socialists, but as a generalization it is simply false. Second, Kantian ethical socialism, and we may include here Bernstein's democratic socialism, offered a promising program: it sought to bring about a socialist society through democratic and peaceful means, even if this would mean that painful compromises had to be made; yet, it preserved its integrity and did not lose sight of the final ideal. Its critical interaction between means and ends makes this kind of socialism still significant for our own time. All too often courageous hope is confused with optimism and self-conscious ethical idealism with political naiveté.

NOTES

Preface

1. "Critical Epilogue," p. 289. See Note on References for bibliographic details. Cohen also wrote these words in the first edition of his essay (1896). All my references are to the third edition of 1914. The second edition was published in 1902.

Chapter I

1. See Keith Ward, *The Development of Kant's View of Ethics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 52.

2. This view is supported by the fact that, both in *Lectures on Ethics* and in *Pure Reason*, from which comes the next section that I will discuss, Kant argues that there is no necessary link between virtue and happiness, thus anticipating the antinomy of practical reason in the second *Critique*. See *Lectures on Ethics*, translated by Louis Infield (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1980), p. 82, and *Pure Reason*, section 2 of "The Canon of Pure Reason."

3. See *Kant: Philosophical Correspondence 1759–99*, edited and translated by Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), pp. 14–15 and 83–85 (IX: 147–150). See also Karl Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant, Der Mann und das Werk* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1977), Part I, pp. 220 ff.

4. That Plato did not hold this view is indicated by the fact that he said that the rulers of the perfect city may lie for its benefit, whereas citizens who lied would be punished (*Republic*, 389b–d).

5. Cf. Patrick Riley, *Kant's Political Philosophy* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1983), pp. 3–4.

6. I will return to this issue in Chapter IV, section 2, and argue that Kant's later view is the less plausible one.

7. Kant expressed this sympathy in *On the Old Saw*, p. 81 (VI: 397). Cf. Riley, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 131, who discusses the proposal of the Abbot of St. Pierre. For Kant's claim that we have a duty to seek the republican state and international peace, see, for example, the closing sections of *Justice* and *On the Old Saw*.

8. *Practical Reason*, p. 124 (V: 130). The methodological aspect of this doctrine will be my concern in Chapter II, section 2. It might be objected that the primacy of praxis as a move from ontology to ethics and history "undermines the autonomy of man's existential queries," as Yirmiah

Yovel puts it in *Kant and the Philosophy of History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 292. For Kant, however, dogmatic metaphysics cannot answer such queries; only the moral law (and, hence, moral action) "allows us a view into the realm of the supersensuous, though only a glimpse" (*Practical Reason*, p. 153; V: 160). That it is only a glimpse is not a shortcoming of Kant's doctrine of moral faith; rather, therein lies its strength and profundity. See further Chapter II, section 3, below.

9. Translated by Robert Black (London: New Left Books, 1971), p. 57.

10. Cf. E. J. Lemmon, "Moral Dilemmas," *Philosophical Review* 71 (1962): 139–158.

11. See also Robert B. Pippin, "On the Moral Foundations of Kant's *Rechtslehre*," in *The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, edited by Richard Kennington (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), pp. 112ff.

12. Cf. Yovel, "The Highest Good and History in Kant's Thought," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 54 (1972): 238–283, p. 252. See also his *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, pp. 46ff. Yovel argues that there are two stages in Kant's ethics. The first stage investigates the good will and the universal-law formula of the categorical imperative, whereas the second stage deals with the duty to promote the highest good as "a more complete and comprehensive imperative than the basic categorical one" (*ibid.*, p. 33). Arguing that most Kant interpretations have limited his ethics to the first stage alone, Yovel concludes that they have limited his ethics to an "internal morality" which is passive and politically conservative. Yovel arrives at this conclusion by claiming that Kant's ethics of the first stage presents us with a "pure, empty moral will" (44). This is a questionable premise, even from the perspective of the private-ethics interpretation of Kant, but the real problem is that it leads Yovel to argue that "there is a lack of direct or intrinsic transition from the concept of the pure will [and its law] to that of the highest good" (*ibid.*). I will defend the opposite view in the next section; i.e., the duty to promote this good is grounded in the moral law. An interesting aspect of the two-stage theory, however, is that we may see the process from testing personal maxims to the duty to promote the highest good as one that will gradually emerge in the moral life of the individual. Cf. note 45 below.

13. In *Rationalism in Politics* (London: Methuen, 1962).

14. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973.

15. Cf. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, pp. 39ff.

16. See also Chapter III, section 3, below.

17. For an exploration along these lines, see Jeffrie G. Murphy, *Kant: The Philosophy of Right* (London: Macmillan, 1970). Arguing against Murphy, Pippin maintains in "On the Moral Foundations of Kant's *Rechtslehre*" that the duty to promote the highest good is indispensable for showing that we have a duty to seek the republican state and international peace. This is doubtful. My analysis of the categorical imperative will show that this imperative demands that we seek external freedom for all human beings,

and on this basis we can derive these political duties. I will, however, not stress this point at present for reasons which are explained below.

18. *The Categorical Imperative* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 140. Paton's view is based on Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, translated by James Haden (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 238ff. Translation of *Kants Leben und Lehre* (1918), closing volume of the Cassirer edition of Kant's work. Cassirer was a pupil of Cohen, and the latter's Kant interpretation is manifest here. Cassirer fully acknowledges his indebtedness to Cohen in the Foreword to *Kant's Life and Thought* (p. 3). For Cohen's own view of the universal-law formula, see his *Kants Begründung der Ethik* (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer, 1910²), pp. 213 ff. The first edition appeared in 1877.

19. *Practical Reason*, p. 27 (V: 32). Cf. Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought*, pp. 240–41.

20. Cf. Lewis White Beck, *A Commentary on Kant's 'Critique of Practical Reason'* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 159–60.

21. See *Justice*, p. 37 (VII: 33–4). See also *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, revised by James W. Ellington from the Carus translation (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), p. 98n (IV: 122n). Cf. Hans Saner, *Kant's Political Thought*, translated by E. B. Ashton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp. 31–2.

22. See also Chapter V, section 2, below.

23. *Judgment*, pp. 219–20 (§65; V: 451). My analysis of Kant's concept of an organism has benefited from J. D. McFarland, *Kant's Concept of Teleology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), Ch. V.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 221n (§65; V: 453n). The translator says that Kant probably alludes here to the organization of the United States of America. That Kant had the French Revolution in mind is pointed out by Carl J. Friedrich, *Inevitable Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 181. The latter view is more plausible considering the publication date of *Judgment* (1790) and the great impact that the French Revolution had on the German public (not to speak of Kant's own enthusiasm for this event). Cf. Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant, Der Mann und das Werk*, Part II, p. 219. See also his "Kant und der Sozialismus," *Kant-Studien* 4 (1900): 361–412, p. 365.

25. *Judgment*, p. 222 (§66; V: 454); the first addition [read: person] is mine, the second one is made by the translator of *Judgment*. Cf. Thomas Auxter, "The Teleology of Kant's Ectypal World," *Actes du Congrès d'Ottawa sur Kant*, Volume 5 of *Collection & Philosophica* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1976), pp. 489 ff. Kant's *Lectures on Philosophical Theology*, translated by Allen W. Wood and Gertrude M. Clark (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), supports my analysis. Kant said that the moral perfection of the world is a system in which "every rational creature is combined with every other as reciprocal end and means" (p. 143).

26. We will see in Chapter VI that Cohen does not use the teleological model, but that nonetheless his specific interpretation of the categori-

cal imperative leads to the conclusion that it is the duty of humanity to seek a moral order of universal cooperation. Moreover, Kant's claim that the different formulas express one and the same law sheds doubt on the need for this model.

27. See *Virtue*, pp. 84ff (VII : 232ff). Another example of Kant's uncritical use of the teleological model is his claim that the principle of equality of married persons is not violated when the wife obeys her husband as her master, because the man is by nature superior. See *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Cassirer edition, Volume VII, p. 83. Physical force seems to become here the measure of moral force. Susan Moller Okin rightly observes that Kant's reasoning here is "inconsistent with the fundamentals of [his] entire moral philosophy." See her "Women and the Making of the Sentimental Family," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 11 (1982): 65–88, p. 80.

28. See *Reason and Hope: Selections from the Jewish Writings of Hermann Cohen*, translated by Eva Jospe (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971), p. 180.

29. In *Essays in Existentialism*, edited by Wade Baskin (Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press, 1974), pp. 37 and 38.

30. *Virtue*, p. 85 (VII : 234). In order to apply this moral rule one must know which ends are arbitrary and which are not. Kant raises this issue indirectly in his casuistical questions. See *ibid.*, p. 86. The argument against suicide constitutes a prima facie claim against capital punishment. Kant fails to draw this inference in his endorsement of capital punishment, whereas Cohen uses the argument to come to a rejection of this type of punishment. See *Pure Will*, p. 380. Cf. his "Vernichtung der sittlichen Person," in Cohen, *Schriften zur Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte*, Volume II, edited by Albert Görland and Ernst Cassirer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1928). See also Steven S. Schwarzschild, "Kantianism on the Death Penalty (and Related Social Problems)," *Archiv für Rechts- und Sozialphilosophie* 71 (1985): 343–372.

31. *Ethics* 91 (1980): 84–99.

32. In *Respect for Persons*, *Tulane Studies in Philosophy*, Volume 31, edited by O. H. Green (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1982), p. 26. The arguments below are more clearly expressed and developed in Hill than in Atwell.

33. Cf. Schwarzschild, "The Tenability of Hermann Cohen's Construction of the Self," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 13 (1975): 361–384, p. 362.

34. "What Is Orientation in Thinking?," in Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, translated by Beck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), pp. 303–04. Cassirer edition: Vol. IV, pp. 363–64.

35. *Ibid.* At first sight, it may seem that the sovereign of the realm of ends is the earthly ruler, not the divine one. This interpretation is, for example, offered by Pierre Hassner, "Immanuel Kant," in *History of Political Philosophy*, edited by Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963, 1972), p. 565. What counts against this interpretation is that

the earthly ruler is not "a completely independent being without need and with power adequate to his will" and that Kant holds that this ruler has no business interfering in the ethical commonwealth. See Chapter IV, section 3, below. Cf. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, p. 188.

36. *Foundations*, p. 54 (IV: 294–95). Kant's summary is in some respects imprecise. For example, he mentions three formulas rather than six. The issue is not of great importance and is discussed in Bruce Aune, *Kant's Theory of Morals* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 113.

37. One other example of the political relevance of *Pure Reason* may be mentioned here, as it concerns totalitarianism in its fascist variant. The third analogy of experience formulates the principle of coexistence, in accordance with the law of reciprocity or community. Kant argues that the real community (*reale Gemeinschaft*; *communitum*) is the objective ground for the subjective community (*communio*). See *Pure Reason*, pp. 235–36 (III: 191–92). Kant, then, stipulates the priority of the society of legal reciprocity (*Gesellschaft*) above the community (*Gemeinschaft*). In totalitarian thought in its fascist variant the priority is reversed—that is, the latter is upheld as a model for the former—and the naturalistic foundation of the community is emphasized (*Blut und Boden* ideology). Cf. Henning Günther, *Philosophie des Fortschritts: Hermann Cohens Rechtfertigung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Goldman, 1972): "Die Gemeinschaft, zentrale Parole des Faschismus" (p. 19). We will see that Cohen also rejects the naturalistic *Gemeinschaft* notion.

38. Kant's claim that we must transform the church (and all other religious institutions) in light of the moral ideal may seem to contradict this statement, but, as we will see in Chapter IV, section 3, he contends that the church is to be changed into an "inner" unification of good wills. This unification is subject to precisely the problem I am discussing here.

39. Allen E. Buchanan, in his "The Right to a Decent Minimum of Health Care," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 13 (1984): 55–78, pp. 70ff, gives a good example of the limits of beneficence. He argues that *rational* altruistic agents will opt for state-regulated health-care programs because such regulation is required in order to deal with these two problems: the uncertainty whether one's individual contribution to large-scale projects will be effective at all, and the diversity in the expressions of beneficence. Similar remarks apply, of course, to other important human goods.

40. *Selected Essays of Lon L. Fuller*, edited by Kenneth I. Winston (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1981), p. 201. Daniel E. Wueste brought this passage to my attention.

41. The importance of communication for morality is stressed in the work of Jürgen Habermas, but Habermas distorts Kant's ethics by describing it as a mere monological private ethics. See, for example, his *Legitimation Crisis*, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 87ff.

42. See "An Old Question," pp. 147 and 150 (VII: 400 and 404). At times, Kant even suggests that rule by one individual is to be preferred to representative democracy. See *Justice*, §51 and *Peace*, p. 97 (VI: 438). His

argument for this view is that it makes it possible that the greatest number of people will be represented. His main reason for ultimately rejecting the notion of a single ruler is that there is no guarantee that this ruler will not act along the lines of his own will (despotism) rather than represent the people.

43. See *Foundations*, p. 20 (IV: 260), where Kant states that "common human reason . . . knows . . . what is consistent or inconsistent with duty" and that the task of moral theory is only to draw attention to the moral principle embedded in "common human reason," not to argue for new moral duties. We may grant this claim for certain individual duties, but it seems definitely mistaken when the concern is active social duties. See also *Practical Reason*, p. 8n (V: 8n). Cf. Beck, *Commentary*, p. 154, note 56.

44. *Education*, translated by Annette Churton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), p. 84 (VIII: 491).

45. *Foundations*, p. 48 (IV: 289). The two ways of grounding this duty may be interpreted as reflecting different stages in the moral life of the individual. We may speculate that the broader concern typically emerges at a later stage of moral development.

Chapter II

1. Cf. Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant, Der Mann und das Werk*, Part I, pp. 299–300.

2. See *Foundations*, p. 53 (IV: 293). Cf. *Practical Reason*, pp. 90–91 (V: 96–97).

3. *Virtue*, p. 59 (VII: 209). The translation of *Lust* and *Unlust* as pleasure and pain is not accurate, although widely used. *Lust* has a more general meaning than pleasure, and, as will soon become clear, Kant explicates the *Lust* associated with moral feeling in terms of self-contentment and inner peace—a state of moral well-being which seems to have little to do with pleasure as such. Obviously, similar remarks apply to the translation of *Unlust* as pain. Cf. George Schrader, "The Status of Feeling in Kant's Philosophy," in *Actes du Congrès d'Ottawa sur Kant*, Volume 5 of *Collection & Philosophica* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1976), pp. 146ff.

4. See Part II of *Practical Reason*, entitled "Methodology of Pure Practical Reason." See also Part II of *Virtue*, "The Ethical Doctrine of Method." Kant typically presents his examples set in the context of the moral education of children. However, the life of morally courageous individuals may inspire adult agents as well. Kant's discussion of the Book of Job may serve here as an example. See "On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies," translated by Michel Despland in his *Kant on History and Religion* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1973). See Cassirer ed., Vol. VI.

5. *Kant-Studien* 64 (1973): 283–314.

6. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1970, p. 46.

7. Cf. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 67.

8. P. 38 (VII: 190). Kant states here that "the notion that I am under obligation to take as my end something that lies in the concepts of practical reason, and so to have a material ground of choice beyond the formal one that Law contains, would be the concept of an *end which is in itself a duty*." Kant is here drawing a distinction between the doctrine of law and the doctrine of virtue.

9. The "politicians" are, for example, attacked in the first Appendix of *Peace* and in the second section of "An Old Question." Kant's trust in simple and ordinary persons is discussed in Beck's *Commentary*, p. 235.

10. Cf. Barrington Moore, Jr., *Injustice, The Social Bases of Obedience and Revolt* (White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1978), Ch. III.

11. See also L. W. Nauta, *Argumenten voor een Kritische Ethiek* (Arguments for a Critical Ethics) (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1971), p. 80.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 145 (399). Kant adds the qualification that enthusiasm cannot "be wholly esteemed, since passion as such deserves censure." In *Judgment* (p. 112; § 29; V: 344) Kant explains that enthusiasm as an affection "makes it impossible to exercise a free deliberation about fundamental propositions so as to determine ourselves thereby." This remark seems mistaken with regard to *moral* enthusiasm. What may be noted in this context, though, is that moral enthusiasm may be accompanied by a lack of critical assessment of those historical events which inspire this enthusiasm. In other words, the danger that must be guarded against is that, in one's enthusiasm for a progressive historical event, one lose sight of the less "promising" aspects of this event. We will see in Chapter V, section 1, below, that Kant did not succumb to this danger in his enthusiasm for the French Revolution—he criticized the regime of terror—and thus his own example belies his remark on enthusiasm as in need of censure.

13. The feeling of *Mitleid* is analyzed in Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*, translated by Simon Kaplan (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1972), Chapters VIII and IX. The first German edition appeared posthumously in 1919. Cohen argues that *Mitleid* transforms the empirical *Nebmensch* into an ethical *Mitmensch*—co-suffering produces the co-person. His analysis is discussed in Schwarzschild, "The Tenability of Hermann Cohen's Construction of the Self."

14. Cf. Kant's discussion of practical love in *Practical Reason*, pp. 85ff (V : 91ff). See also *Virtue*, § 25.

15. It might be objected that the existence of poverty and crime cannot be explained on the basis of political factors alone, but we will see in our discussion of Kant's philosophy of history that he was not unaware of the fact that economic factors also directly cause such societal evils. Nonetheless, we will also note that his solution for such problems is too much politically focused, this at the cost of required economic change.

16. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972, 1978), p. 524. Marx's statement that he will not withdraw from the International reflects the bitter struggle between Bakuninists and Marxists at the Hague Congress. To prevent the General Council of the

International from falling into Bakuninist hands, Marx successfully arranged at the Hague Congress for the transfer of this Council to New York. This meant, in effect, that the First International came to an end. See further David Fernbach's Introduction to Karl Marx, *The First International and After*, edited by Fernbach (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 49–50.

17. Cf. Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*, p. 27. See also Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, pp. 354ff.

18. *Religion*, p. 92 (VI: 245). That Kant's primary concern is not with what will happen "in the end" is even more clear from the following passage (*ibid.*, p. 130; 287):

The idea of the highest good . . . cannot be realized by man himself. . . . And now there opens up before him the abyss of a mystery regarding what God may do, whether indeed *anything at all*, and if so, *what* in particular should be ascribed to God. Meanwhile man knows . . . nothing but what he must himself do in order to be worthy of that supplement, unknown, or at least incomprehensible, to him. (Translation altered.)

Kant, however, somewhat overstates his point here, for, as we will see in our discussion of the postulate of the existence of God, he holds that we may in regulative manner ascribe properties to God on the basis of how we conceive His "supplementary efforts."

19. See *Virtue*, p. 47 (VII: 197). Cf. *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 51. The issue is discussed in some detail in John R. Silber, "The Moral Good and the Natural Good in Kant's Ethics," *Review of Metaphysics* 36 (1982): 397–437, pp. 419 ff.

20. Cf. Paton, *The Categorical Imperative*, pp. 85 ff. See also Mary J. Gregor, *Laws of Freedom* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), p. 78.

21. See *Foundations*, pp. 35–36 (IV: 275–76). Kant mentions these ends in the context of his argument that our conception of happiness is so indefinite that we do not really know what we want and are inconsistent in our willing when we wish to attain happiness. He overstates his case here, his point being that the precepts of prudence, because of their variability, cannot function as practical laws. After all, taking Kant too seriously here would undermine his concept of the highest good. Moreover, a certain degree of surprise, spontaneity, and creativity is not incompatible with happiness, but is rather an element of it. I will soon argue that Kant tended to neglect this aspect of human happiness.

22. To the extent that Kant is correct that we do not really know what we want when we desire happiness (see note 21 above), this formulation of the duty to promote the highest good is to be preferred. Moreover, it seems that this formulation better conveys what is really at stake: a tremendous amount of suffering in the world that can, and ought to be, alleviated or prevented.

23. Thomas Auxter draws a somewhat similar distinction, namely,

between the ectypal world (the realm of ends), which he calls the "highest good," and the highest good as the perfect (*consummatum*) condition in which virtue and happiness exactly correlate, which he calls the "highest good." See his "The Unimportance of Kant's Highest Good," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 17 (1979): 121–134, p. 127. See also his "The Teleology of Kant's Ectypal World," p. 491. One important difference between our respective analyses is that Auxter views the highest good, as a mere "otherworldly conception," thus, I think, drawing the wrong inference that the two conceptions of the highest good do not partly overlap in Kant's work. Auxter makes the same mistake in his *Kant's Moral Teleology* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1982). This book came too late to my attention to be discussed in the text. It offers some criticisms of Kant's highest good doctrine that accord with the view defended here. In contrast to the present study, Auxter does not seek to explore the social (and historical) dimensions of Kant's moral teleology, although he promises us a future book on this topic. See *ibid.*, pp. xi and 182. That the highest good_m, and not the highest good_d, is the final end of the moral law, seems also to have been the view of Hermann Cohen. In *Kants Begründung der Ethik* (p. 350), he says that "the community of autonomous beings is the only highest good." Cf. *Reason and Hope*, p. 82.

24. Cf. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 63. It may be conceded that the highest good_d sets a deontic "ought" for an omnipotent rational being, but this does not mean that it is our duty to bring about this end. Moreover, Kant's claim that such a being would bring about the highest good_d raises the suspicion of circularity: in order even to make intelligible the view that this good sets a deontic "ought," Kant already assumes in the antinomy what he still needs to show on the basis of the antinomy, to wit, the existence of a being that can harmonize nature with the moral intention.

25. Cf. John R. Silber, "Kant's Conception of the Highest Good as Immanent and Transcendent," *Philosophical Review* 68 (1959): 469–492, pp. 483 ff. Silber's notion of the highest good as transcendent has a similar function to that which I ascribe to the highest good_d, although, as we will soon see, he gives an altogether different interpretation of the duty to promote this good.

26. "The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant's Ethics," *Ethics* 73 (1963): 179–197, p. 183. See also his "Kant's Conception of the Highest Good as Immanent and Transcendent."

27. Cf. Jeffrie G. Murphy, "The Highest Good as Content for Kant's Ethical Formalism," *Kant-Studien* 56 (1965): 102–110, p. 106. In "The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant's Ethics" (p. 195), Silber seeks to avoid this problem by claiming that the pursuit of virtue conditions the balancing of virtue and happiness; but, as Murphy notes, it is difficult to see how Silber can consistently argue for this on his own terms.

28. See, for example, *Foundations*, p. 9 (IV: 249). See also note 31 below.

29. Kant makes an exception to this rule in his discussion of capital punishment, maintaining that in certain cases the death sentence is better than penal servitude because it guarantees that criminals are punished "in proportion to their inner viciousness" (*Justice*, p. 103; VII: 141). This is just one of the many ways in which Kant's defense of capital punishment conflicts with the basic premises of his practical philosophy. Cf. Chapter I, note 30, above. See also Schwarzschild, "Kantianism on the Death Penalty . . .," pp. 348–49.

30. Cf. *Religion*, p. 16 (VI: 158). See also Murphy, "The Highest Good as Content for Kant's Ethical Formalism," p. 107.

31. The first of these statements may seem to be contradicted by Kant's claim in *Practical Reason* (p. 63; V: 68) that someone who annoys "peace-loving folk" should not complain when he gets a "good beating," because "justice has been done to him . . . the proportion between welfare and well-doing [is] here put into practice." But notice that Kant does not say that we ought to bring unhappiness to the immoral person; rather, he adopts the standpoint of the impartial observer and approves or disapproves the distribution of virtue and happiness in the universe. Cf. *Foundations*, p. 9 (IV: 249). Such an evaluative judgment does not commit one to action in accordance with it. Cf. "On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies," p. 288n (VI: 127n.). Another consideration is that the above example is extremely banal. Should we take Kant seriously here? The second of these statements may seem to be contradicted by Kant's "Fragments of a Moral Catechism" (*Virtue*, § 52). I think, however, that a careful reading of the text makes clear that Kant's main concern here is to show that the virtuous deserve to be happy, not to argue that the duty of beneficence must be limited to the virtuous.

32. Cf. Curtis H. Peters, *Immanuel Kant on Hope* (Dissertation, Washington University, St. Louis, 1975), pp. 31ff.

33. In *Immanuel Kant on Hope* (pp. 62ff. and 160ff.) Peters offers an interesting criticism of Kant in this respect, although his criticism loses some of its force by equating the principle of justice to the *jus taliones*.

34. "The Importance of the Highest Good in Kant's Ethics," p. 195.

35. Cf. Silber, "Kant's Conception of the Highest Good as Immanent and Transcendent," pp. 474–75. To further illustrate the above inconsistency, it may be noted that Kant claims in (c) that the highest good is to be thought of as "to be made real by *our* will," although he claims in conclusion (m) that it is "our duty to *promote* the highest good."

36. This succinct formulation is given by Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 294.

37. See "On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies."

38. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978, p. 138.

39. Cf. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, p. 368. Cohen argues here that the issue of our time is not whether we have more sunshine than rain, but rather the suffering that human beings inflict upon one another. He adds that it is the merit of socialist thought that it poses precisely this latter question.

Chapter III

1. Kant added the question mark. Its purpose is not explained.
2. The distinction here between the natural and the moral end of humanity corresponds to the distinction Kant draws in *Judgment* between the ultimate end of nature and the final end of creation. The purpose of culture as our natural end is the highest political good, whereas the community of legislators is our moral end. See further Chapter IV, section 1, below.
3. In his attempt to detect a progressive development within history, the Kantian philosophical historian may come to suggest new empirical links or fields of inquiry. Thus a reflective history may have some theoretical heuristic value for empirical history. Cf. Burleigh T. Wilkins, "Teleology in Kant's Philosophy of History," *History and Theory* 5 (1966): 172–185. We should, however, not infer from this that Kant seeks to sit in the chair of the historian proper; rather, we may say that he looks critically over the shoulder of the empirical historian, emphasizing the emancipatory significance of historical research. Kant himself explicitly states in "Universal History" (p. 25; IV: 165–66) that he does not attempt to play the role of the historian proper: "That I would want to displace the work of practicing empirical historians with this Idea of world history . . . would be a misinterpretation of my intention. It is only a suggestion of what a philosophical mind (which would have to be well versed in history) could essay from another point of view." Cf. Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant*, p. 212 n. 54.
4. See *ibid.*, p. 78 (395). Cf. "An Old Question," section 10.
5. "Today's Hope: Conversations with Sartre," by Benny Lévy, *Telos*, 44 (1980): 155–181, pp. 180–81. Originally published in three parts in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, March 1980. Translated by Lilliam Hernandez, George Waterston, and Claire Hubert.
6. See *ibid.*, pp. 171–72, and 179. That Sartre's project of grounding hope is Kantian in orientation is argued in some detail by Steven S. Schwarzschild in his "J.-P. Sartre as Jew," *Modern Judaism* 3 (1983): 39–73.
7. Cf. William A. Galston, *Kant and the Problem of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 213.
8. In altering the translations of Kant's historical essays, I have benefited from *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, translated by Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), and *Kant's Political Writings*, translated by H. B. Nisbet and edited by Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).
9. Cf. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, pp. 144–46.
10. Here, and elsewhere, I have departed from Beck in not capitalizing the word 'nature,' since I find that the capitals needlessly strengthen the impression of personification.
11. Edited with an Interpretive Essay by Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).
12. The phrase 'the cunning of nature' is coined after Hegel's "cunning of reason" (*List der Vernunft*), and is used by Yovel, who bases him-

self on Eric Weil. See Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 140n. The fact that nature, and not reason, is the artist of deception suffices to demarcate Kant's philosophy of history from Hegel's. I will discuss some major differences between their respective views on history in section 3, below.

13. Cf. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, pp. 148ff, who rightly argues that Kant anticipates here Hegel's master-slave dialectic.

14. Cf. *Foundations*, p. 11 (IV: 251). In "What Is Orientation in Thinking?" Kant discusses romantic and intuitionist attacks on reason, which were increasing in his own time as a reaction to the Enlightenment, and warns us that such attacks threaten civil liberties. Goldmann, in his *Immanuel Kant*, p. 122, perceptively observes that the rise of fascism in our century has "shown us how penetrating Kant's vision was."

15. "Conjectural Beginning," p. 63 (IV: 336). Fackenheim's translation here is rather liberal: the term 'second nature' is not Kant's, although it captures his meaning. Kant said: "... bis vollkommene Kunst wieder Natur wird . . ."

16. In *Anthropology* (p. 188; VIII: 221), Kant puts the dilemma in even broader terms, arguing that human beings need moral education in order to become virtuous and that those who provide this education are themselves in need of moral education.

17. Cf. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, p. 510. See also *Religion*, p. 92 (VI: 245).

18. Cf. Galston, *Kant and the Problem of History*, p. 241. See also Hassner, "Immanuel Kant," pp. 588–89. The passage just cited from "Universal History" is, for example, contradicted by the following statement from *Peace* (pp. 112–13; VI: 453): "A good constitution is not to be expected from morality, but, conversely, a good moral condition of a people is to be expected only under a good constitution."

19. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 595.

20. See Berlin, "Historical Inevitability," in *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*, edited by Hans Meyerhoff (Garden City, N. J.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959), pp. 257 ff. Reprinted from Berlin, *Historical Inevitability* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).

21. "Universal History" p. 23 (IV: 163). Beck translates *Staatskörper* as "international government." This is a bit misleading; for Kant argues that, temporarily at least, it is better to work toward a federation of states, because an international government carries with it the danger of universal despotism. See *Peace*, pp. 101–02 and 113 (VI: 442 and 453). See also *On the Old Saw*, p. 79 (VI: 395). Cf. Riley, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 116. See also Friedrich, *Inevitable Peace*, p. 46.

22. See also Chapter IV, section 3, below. I will later also argue (in particular in Chapter VI, section 1, below) that Kant's proposal for peace within the state suffers from a similar defect.

23. See, respectively, "Universal History," pp. 23 and 22 (IV: 163 and 162).

24. See, for example, *Kant and the Problem of History*, pp. 88ff.

25. Thus Galston states in *Kant and the Problem of History*: "[T]he

introduction to Hegel's *Philosophy of History* bears a startling (though entirely unacknowledged) resemblance to the 'Idea for a Universal History.' Yet in Hegel's thought all the Kantian hesitation, ambiguity, and perplexity has vanished" (p. 262). That Galston ascribes such doubt and ambiguity to Kant is not surprising, for he maintains that for Kant "[h]istory is the attempt to show that the world is just and benevolently ordered" (p. 230).

26. Again, this is implied by Kant's doctrine of the reflective judgment, which leads to a critical teleology, not a dogmatic one. Note, moreover, that even if we accept Kant's contention that the postulate of the existence of God can be derived from the moral law, it does not follow that a higher cause is at work within human history; for the major objective function of this postulate is to provide a ground for the belief that there is an ontic possibility in nature which makes feasible human action toward the highest good. The minor objective function of the postulate points to the same conclusion: we may hope for divine assistance—that is, the bridging of the gap between the highest good_m and the highest good_d—only at the end of history.

27. *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 25.

28. Cf. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1946), p. 256.

29. Hegel uses the term '*wirklich*' to refer to those aspects of reality in which existence and essence are synthesized [i.e., where the Spirit is at work (*wirken*)], whereas he uses the term '*real*' to denote those aspects of reality which have mere existence.

30. The first two of these objections can be found in the Preface to *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 4 ff. They are discussed in some detail in Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp. 123 ff. Hegel's critique of the French Revolution can be found in *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 599 ff ("Absolute Freedom and Terror"). Although this critique is often specifically directed toward Rousseau, it seems that the broader target is the Kantian heritage as such, in which, following Hegel, an "abstract" ideal is counterposed to historical reality, with the result that the desire emerges to violently change this reality.

31. *Philosophy of Right*, pp. 12–13. Avineri, in his at times far-fetched attempt to portray Hegel as a progressive thinker, maintains that this passage, though "seemingly quietistic," contains the hidden critical message that "philosophy cannot change the world, only interpret it; but by its very act of interpretation it changes it, it tells the world that its time is up" (*Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, p. 130). This argument is plainly mistaken: Hegel's political thought becomes praxis-oriented only after the fact (i.e., the demise of his own time) to which it did not seek to contribute. After all, Avineri himself claims that "Hegel saw his own time as the apotheosis of history, as the reconciliation of the actual and the rational"

(p. 129). Or should we declare that *any* given political philosophy has the hidden critical message of fundamental change to come, so that we should presume that our time is up not some of the time but all of the time?

32. See, respectively, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 216, and *The Philosophy of History*, p. 457.

33. Cf. Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*, pp. 272–73.

34. *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State*, p. 234.

35. *Philosophy of Right*, p. 11. It may be noted that Michael Oakeshott views enjoyment of the present as one of the basic features of conservatism. See Chapter I, section 2, above.

36. In accordance with this, Hegel says of the German nations of his day: "Freedom has found the means of realizing its Ideal—its true existence. This is the ultimate result which the process of History is intended to accomplish" (*The Philosophy of History*, pp. 109–110). It is true that Hegel at some points in his work seems to suggest that the future is open—e.g., his famous remark about America as the land of the future (see *ibid.*, p. 86)—but it is difficult to see how on his own terms he could have meant to say anything other than that the political principles embedded in the German nations of his own time (notably, the Prussian state) would in the future be extended to other nations. Thus Hegel's philosophy of history, as contrasted to Kant's, remains within the political horizon of his own society.

37. Both Arendt and Beiner neglect to tell us what they mean by the "universal," but considering the fact that Arendt argues that Kant's notion of dignity conflicts with his idea of (infinite) progress, we must assume that she (and Beiner) had Kant's meaning in mind. At any rate, what matters here is not so much Arendt's view per se, as an explication and discussion of important objections to Kant's philosophy of history.

38. To avoid possible misunderstanding, let me note that my claim here is not that on Kant's account only morally committed persons should be treated as having unconditional worth. For Kant, it is our duty to treat all human beings as ends in themselves. The issue at stake, however, is whether those persons who have displayed dignity vis-à-vis history are robbed of their dignity by Kant's notion of (infinite) progress. The very fact that many human agents have not displayed dignity in the historical drama is, of course, not something we can in some sense see as the fault of Kant's ethics, and, as we have just noted in our discussion of Galston's objection, Kant does not approve of the fact that history uses many human agents as means only. Kant himself seems to emphasize this point: that his philosophy of history does not *make* individuals (or even whole peoples), who are subject to the cunning of nature, into mere means, by noting that these persons unintentionally bring about progress and that "they would set little store by it if they did know it" ("Universal History," p. 12; IV: 151). Finally, it may be noted that Kant's ethics also recognizes that dignity can be displayed through the fulfillment of individual duties.

39. Cf. Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Ethik*, pp. 512–13.

40. Cited in Timothy R. Keck, *Kant and Socialism: The Marburg School*

in *Wilhelminian Germany* (Dissertation, University of Wisconsin/Madison, 1975), p. 421. It must nonetheless be said that Toller had unrealistic expectations about the changes that the Munich Revolution could effect, and it seems fair to say that with the murder of Kurt Eisner the Kantian road came to an end. I will return to Eisner in the Appendix, below.

41. The qualification must be added that Kant was also sharply critical of the moral terrorism that accompanied the Revolution in its later stages, but this issue will be our concern in Chapter V, section 1, below.

42. My description here of the moral society is influenced by Habermas's notion of the ideal speech community. My counterfactual "move" is also indebted to his work. See note 44 below.

43. Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1976.

44. In *Habermas: Critical Debates*, edited by John B. Thompson and David Held (London: Macmillan, 1982).

45. Cited in *ibid.* Cited from Peukert, *Wissenschaftstheorie*, p. 282. Habermas mistakenly claims that this passage is to be found in a personal letter from Horkheimer to Walter Benjamin, dated March 16, 1937. This letter contains the next passage cited; see note 46 below.

46. Cited in Peukert, *Wissenschaftstheorie*, p. 278. Cf. note 45 above.

47. *Die Sehnsucht nach dem ganz Anderen*, An Interview with Commentary by Helmuth Gumnior (Hamburg: Fricke, 1970), pp. 61–62.

48. Cf. Peukert, *Wissenschaftstheorie*, p. 284n. Peukert reformulates Kant's famous question "What may I hope?" in a manner similar to mine, but he fails to observe that this reformulation is actually in accord with Kant's meaning. Cf. my earlier observations in Chapter II, section 3, above.

Chapter IV

1. Cf. Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 183 n28.

2. See also *Judgment*, § 59, where Kant argues that beauty is the symbol of morality. That science makes us susceptible to morality follows from Kant's claim that there are structural affinities between the natural order and the moral order. See "Of the Typic of Pure Practical Reason" in the second *Critique*.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 285 (515). Yovel maintains that Kant "must be [here] referring to other creatures that in his belief inhabit the universe" (*Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 176 n20). Yovel misses Kant's philosophical point: he refers to other *rational* creatures to emphasize that it is not a mere biological fact which makes us into the final end of creation—this would be an instance of what Peter Singer calls "speciesism"—but our moral nature. Thus Kant also stresses that the supreme condition of humanity is not a given but a task.

4. I assume here that Kant is best understood as a nonhedonist, a viewpoint which I have defended in my discussion of his notion of happiness in Chapter II, section 2, above.

5. The more logical inference seems to be that such devils would opt for a world government, i.e., an international coercive agency, but, for a

reason that will be explained in section 3, point (g), below, Kant holds that a league of nations is a more prudential choice.

6. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

7. Kant does not mention all these liberties and restricts the right to vote to economically independent male citizens. See further Chapter VI, section 1, below. That he is in general a fierce defender of civil liberties is clear from my earlier discussion in Chapter I of his view of the importance of the freedom of public expression of one's thought. See also Chapter III, note 14, above.

8. I will later criticize Kant's view on this issue. For a rebuttal of Rawls's arguments in this regard, see Norman Daniels, "Equal Liberty and Unequal Worth of Liberty," in *Reading Rawls*, edited by Daniels (New York: Basic Books, n.d.).

9. Cf. Robert Paul Wolff, *Understanding Rawls* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 122ff.

10. Cf. R. M. Hare, "Rawls' Theory of Justice," in *Reading Rawls*, pp. 90 and 101.

11. There are, of course, situations in which intelligent devils most likely would not opt for such restrictions on liberty. To give one example, the ethnic majority is an ethnic minority in an adjacent country. Fear that their repressive measures will be met by similar measures in the other country might prevent the ethnic majority from placing restrictions on liberty. Such "happy" coincidences are significant behind the veil of ignorance, assuming that most people are conservative gamblers, but, in the absence of this veil, they are nothing other than "happy" coincidences and therein lies the problem.

12. *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, p. 189. Yovel's view is criticized in Riley, *Kant's Political Thought*, pp. 80ff.

13. More specifically, Kant argues that religious wars, accusations of heresy, expulsion, and the like, emerge because the different faiths proclaim that their nonrational dimension is universally valid. Kant views the Catholic church as the proto-example of this, but notes that the Protestant church would often gladly follow suit were it not for the fact that part of its identity is to reject the claim to universality of the Catholic church. Thus Kant says that examples of "arch-catholic Protestants" abound. See *Religion*, pp. 99–100 (VI: 253–54).

14. Cf. Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant*, pp. 171–72 and 178.

15. *Justice*, p. 35 (VII: 32). A little further on (p. 39; 35) Kant adds that justice here is to be understood in a narrow sense, involving the "authorization to use coercion." Justice may also be thought of in a wider sense, as denoting equity, but, Kant argues, this kind of justice "admits a right without coercion," i.e., it is not a form of legal justice. To illustrate this point, Kant says that it is a duty of justice (equity) to compensate one's servant for inflation, but, if this clause is not added to the labor contract, the master cannot be coerced to do so.

16. The distinction between wide and narrow duties is discussed in *Virtue*, pp. 49 ff. (VII: 199 ff.). In a word, wide duties leave it a matter of

individual choice how much and in precisely what manner one wishes to contribute toward the realization of an obligatory end, whereas narrow duties do not leave such room, but specify how one should act. Kant holds that the duties of virtue are of wide obligation, whereas juridical duties are of narrow obligation.

17. The rationale for this view is that it seems that in the moral society education and information can fulfill all the rational purposes of punishment proper, such as prevention of rule violations and encouragement of law-abidingness. Cf. Tom Campbell, *The Left and Rights* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 79 ff., where Campbell argues in some detail that socialist society can be based on a noncoercive legal order. It falls outside the scope of my study to address the question whether the regulative idea of the end of all punishment, as sketched here, is compatible with Kant's retributive theory of punishment. The issue receives some attention in Schwarzschild, "Kantianism on the Death Penalty . . .," pp. 369–70.

18. For references, see Chapter III, note 21, above.

19. Although Kant recognizes that such threats do not guarantee total compliance (see *Religion*, p. 87; VI: 240), it seems that he, like many other legal theorists, overestimates their efficacy (see "Universal History," p. 16; IV: 157; and *Justice*, p. 19; VII: 19). Cf. Campbell, *The Left and Rights*, p. 69. For obvious reasons, sociological evidence is limited. Relying on this evidence and common sense, a recent report comes to the cautious conclusion that "[t]he threat and imposition of punishment is called for in order to secure compliance—not full compliance, but more compliance than there might be were there no legal penalties at all." See Andrew von Hirsch, *Doing Justice* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), p. 44. Report of the Committee for the Study of Incarceration.

20. Cf. William W. Murdoch, *The Poverty of Nations* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), p. 309.

Chapter V

1. Robert E. Anchor, the translator of "An Old Question," adds the explanatory note that Wieland's *Die Geschichte der Abderiten* (1774) must have made the term 'abderitism' readily understandable to Kant's readers. This popular novel described ancient Abdera as a city of human foolishness.

2. See Lewis White Beck's Introduction to Kant, *On History*, p. xii, where he says that Kant was "almost the last and certainly the greatest of the 'Jacobins' in Germany." Beck draws from G. P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution* (London, 1920).

3. See *Justice*, p. 140 (VII: 180). See also *Peace*, Second Supplement, and *Lectures on Ethics*, p. 253. Contra Nicholson, it may be noted that Kant typically views such a reform as also resulting from a growing public enlightenment. But this does not invalidate the main point that change through "legal" means is one aspect of Kant's thesis of progress.

4. See, for example, *Religion* (pp. 176–77n.; VI: 338–39), where Kant states that he will raise no protest against the ruling powers when they, constrained by the prevailing circumstances, postpone very far into the future the granting of civil freedom to all, provided that they at least acknowledge that this must eventually occur.

5. See further Yovel, *Kant and the Philosophy of History*, Chapter V. Yovel also argues in detail that the noumenal status of practical reason is inconsistent with this idea that moral reason arises within history, stating that Kant, “unlike Hegel, . . . cannot allow for the *temporalization* of reason” (p. 271). Placing the problem in the broader context of Kant’s distinction between noumenal and phenomenal reality in general, Yovel views the difficulty at hand—that is, no mediation is possible between rational and empirical history—as so serious that he concludes his book with the following words: “Between the Kantian failure and Hegel’s overachievement, the idea of history must be questioned anew.” In response, a few brief remarks are in order. First, we can accept Kant’s thesis that we are both moral beings and beings with inclinations, without committing ourselves to the view that we are members, as it were, of two worlds, i.e., the world of noumena and that of phenomena. Cf. W. David Ross, *Kant’s Ethical Theory* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 85. Likewise, we can accept Kant’s description of practical freedom as our ability to act independently of our lower desires and be guided by the moral law without committing ourselves to his particular account of transcendental freedom as the nontemporal power to begin causal series in time. This procedure I have followed. (My occasional use of the terms ‘noumenal’ and ‘phenomenal’ in reference to the ideal self and the self of the inclinations should not be interpreted as implying these commitments.) Second, once we accept, however, Kant’s noumenon-phenomenon distinction as it relates to reason and human action, and interpret it as an *ontological* distinction, not only the problem of the historical evolution of practical reason emerges, but a variety of other problems as well, each contradicting Kant’s moral beliefs. For example, the idea of moral progress becomes self-contradictory, and we can no longer claim that the enthusiasm of the spectators of the French Revolution signifies a good will, because all our observable actions must be seen as resulting from prior causal series. For a further explication of these types of problem, see Allen W. Wood (ed.), *Self and Nature in Kant’s Philosophy* (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984). Third, a step toward a solution is to replace the “two-world theory” by a “two-standpoint theory”—that is, the scientist proceeds in terms of causal language, whereas the moral actor proceeds in terms of the language of freedom, but no claim is made that one of these languages is privileged in an ontological sense. The ramifications of this view for Kant’s epistemology cannot be addressed here, but Beck, who proposes a similar view, briefly discusses some of them in his *Commentary* (p. 193). (He also claims—perhaps too hesitantly—that this view is intimated in Kant.) The gain is that there is no longer an overriding reason for placing our moral agency in a timeless realm “beyond” the world of phenomena.

Fourth, we can now consistently argue that moral reason evolves within history and has expressed itself (no matter how imperfectly) in some historical events. Moreover, we can still give meaning to the idea of nontemporal reason; it must be seen as a regulative notion, referring to posthistorical reason as the complete elucidation of the moral law (an infinite task), the postulated point of focus of historical and temporal forms of reason. Cf. Steven S. Schwarzschild, "Authority & Reason," *Studies in Jewish Philosophy* (1982): 45–63, pp. 48–49. Finally, it is along these latter lines that I approach in the present study Kant's thesis of the progress of pure practical reason (as one aspect of moral progress as such).

6. See Hans Reiss's Introduction to *Kant's Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 3.

7. These examples are mentioned in *Reflexion* 8051, cited in Beck, "Kant and the Right of Revolution," in his *Essays on Kant and Hume* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 173. Reprinted from *The Journal of the History of Ideas* 32 (1971): 411–22.

8. The issue is not further explained. Earlier in *Justice* (pp. 41–42; 36–37) Kant had argued that the right of necessity is really an imaginary right. This underlines that Kant is here far from offering a justification for revolution, even under life-threatening circumstances.

9. This suggestion is mentioned in Beck, "Kant and the Right of Revolution," p. 172, and rejected as "incredible."

10. This suggestion is mentioned in Beck, "Kant and the Right of Revolution," p. 180, and it too is rejected. A similar proposal is made by Dieter Henrich, "Kant über die Revolution," in Zwi Batscha (ed.), *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 360–61. Henrich claims that Kant's rejection of the right to revolution may be seen as directed against the British attempt to overthrow the French state. Preliminary article 5 of *Peace*—"No State Shall by Force Interfere with the Constitution or Government of Another State"—suffices, however, for this purpose. Henrich's main solution is (f).

11. The solution is offered as a partial one by Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant*, p. 213n.

12. An anonymous reader of the present study suggested this solution. It resembles Beck's initial solution, but after a further explication of this proposal Beck himself concludes that "some inconsistency remains." See "Kant and the Right of Revolution," pp. 181 and 187.

13. See *Justice*, p. 89 (VII: 129–30). This solution is proposed by Schwarzschild, "Kantianism on the Death Penalty . . .," p. 354.

14. Cf. Nicholson, "Kant on the Duty Never to Resist the Sovereign," p. 227.

15. This solution is proposed by Henrich, "Kant über die Revolution," pp. 363–64. It is also discussed in Beck, "Kant and the Right of Revolution," pp. 179–80. My refutation of this solution is indebted to Beck's discussion.

16. See Vorländer, *Immanuel Kant, Der Mann und das Werk*, Part II, pp. 213 and 310. Vorländer also offers a detailed account of Kant's undying

enthusiasm for the French Revolution (see pp. 220 ff.). That the French Revolution rather than the American Revolution receives all the attention in Kant's work is not surprising. The American Revolution took place before Kant's major practical writings; moreover, the French Revolution was at the time much more important in political terms, certainly for Germany.

17. It is also difficult to reconcile with Kant's claim in "Universal History" that we may hope that perpetual peace will emerge after "many reformatory revolutions" (*Revolutionen der Umbildung*) [p. 23; IV: 163].

18. Cited in *Justice*, p. 138 (178–79). The critical review appeared in the *Göttingen Journal* (February 18, 1797). The reviewer was presumably Friedrich Bouterwerk of the University of Göttingen. See *Justice*, p. 130n.

19. Cf. Schwarzschild, "Kantianism on the Death Penalty . . .," p. 355; Schwarzschild draws from Werner Haensel's *Kants Lehre vom Widerstandsrecht* (Berlin, 1926).

20. Cf. Murphy, *Kant: The Philosophy of Right*, p. 138.

21. Cf. John Rawls, "The Justification of Civil Disobedience," in Hugo Adam Bedau (ed.), *Civil Disobedience* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969), p. 247.

22. To avoid possible misunderstanding, it is to be noted that, strictly speaking, the categorical imperative is concerned with the universalization of maxims, not of actions. The civil resister cannot rationally will that everyone follow his example in a given situation, but this does not mean that he cannot rationally will that everyone adopt the maxim of civil disobedience. Comparable remarks hold with regard to such maxims as freedom of movement and freedom of choosing one's occupation. The basic point here is that, in testing such maxims, we should not assume that everyone will act on them at the same time and in the same manner; rather, we should assess whether we can rationally will that all human agents adopt these maxims and then act on them in accordance with their particular needs and circumstances. Now there might be situations in which our acting on such morally permissible maxims as the right to civil disobedience and freedom of movement would lead to unintentional conflicts or immoral results. What this shows is that these maxims express *prima facie* rights, which means that, before acting on them in a given situation, we should see whether other moral considerations come into play. Alternatively, we can approach this type of problem by further specification and determination of our maxims, taking into account how other people are most likely to act or choose in a given situation. Cf. note 23, below. See also my remarks at the end of this section.

23. Cf. Richard A. Wasserstrom, "The Obligation to Obey the Law," in *Civil Disobedience* p. 258; Wasserstrom also analyzes problems similar to those raised in note 22, above.

24. Cf. Arendt, *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 60. Arendt, however, seems to overstate her case by arguing that Kant could conceive of action by the governed only in terms of conspiratorial activity. After all, Kant was familiar with the French Revolution.

25. Cf. Larry May, "Mob Action," where May draws from Sartre's analysis of the French Revolution in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. Paper read at the Eastern Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, December 1985. Copies made available by the APA.

26. In L. W. Beck (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third International Kant Congress* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1972), pp. 314–15.

27. What makes the "prima facie" approach ultimately to be preferred, I think, is that it conveys more clearly that there is something profoundly wrong with a situation in which we have to break certain moral rules for the sake of duty. In other words, this approach keeps the moral ideal in the foreground, whereas it tends to get lost in the approach of further specification and determination of one's maxims.

28. For Kant's denial that we have a right to lie in certain circumstances, see his (in)famous "On a Supposed Right to Lie from Altruistic Motives," in *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*.

29. Cf. Howard Williams, *Kant's Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 204. This book became available to me too late to be discussed in the text. It offers the most extensive critical exposition of Kant's political philosophy currently available in the English language.

30. Cf. my earlier observations on the anger of oppressed human nature in Chapter II, section 1, above.

31. Cf. Despland, *Kant on History and Religion*, pp. 42–43.

32. Broadly speaking, the work of Jürgen Habermas may serve here as an example. Additionally, Kant's philosophy of history is helpful for studying the moral evolution of the individual, for there are structural affinities between this evolution and the evolution of the stages of historical development interpreted as stages of social evolution. Rex P. Stevens approaches Kant's philosophy of history from this angle in *Kant on Moral Practice* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1981), Chapter V.

33. See *Lectures on Ethics*, pp. 252–53. Cf. my discussion in Chapter I, section 1, above. In his later work, however, Kant was more doubtful in this regard, arguing that emancipation through education is not to be expected as long as the state itself is not emancipated. See "An Old Question," section 10. A good analysis of the importance of education (in the broad sense of the word) for the evolution and effective functioning of democratic institutions can be found in A. P. Simonds, "On Being Informed," *Theory and Society* 11 (1982): 587–616. Simonds also shows that the overcoming of illiteracy—the enemy of democracy—was possible only thanks to the development of the printing press, thus illustrating my thesis that processes on the different levels of progress are best understood as feedback processes.

34. Kant's *Perpetual Peace* is discussed from this angle in Friedrich, *Inevitable Peace*. Vorländer undertook a similar effort with respect to the League of Nations in his *Kant und der Gedanke des Völkerbundes* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1919). A more recent discussion of the historical accuracy of Kant's peace analysis and prediction is offered by Michael Doyle, "Kant,

Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 12 (1983): 205–35 and 323–53. Doyle defends with much historical detail two theses that resemble two of Kant's "cunning" roads toward peace: (a) even though liberal democracies have many times fought with nonliberal states, secure liberal democracies have not yet engaged in war with one another; and (b), periods in the last two centuries that show the greatest number and/or intensity of wars also display the greatest increase in the number of liberal democracies (see, respectively, pp. 213 and 352). Projecting this pattern toward the future, Doyle concludes that liberal foreign policy is essentially sound and provides the most promising road toward international peace. (It is also a slow road, because Doyle offers the remarkable prediction that global liberal peace is not to be expected before the year 2113. See p. 352.) A major weakness of this analysis is that it views economic imperialism, covert intervention, war with Third World nations, and so on, as mere abuses of liberal foreign policy rather than as expressions of its capitalist core. The mistaken over-all result is that a fair international economic order is not seen as a necessary and even first step toward international peace. Cf. my observations in Chapter IV, section 3, above.

35. *Toward a Marxist Humanism*, translated by Jane Zielonko Peel (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 152.

36. In "Widerstand und Friede," *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie*, p. 373. Translation by Schwarzschild.

37. Cf. Richard L. Rubenstein, *The Cunning of History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975, 1978). Rubenstein discusses the impact of bureaucracy on systematic human destruction in our century. Bureaucracy is not only a precondition for such slaughter on a large scale, but also facilitates it by diffusing responsibility. Modern technology has a comparable effect in that it makes human destruction "clean."

Chapter VI

1. In Chapter III, section 2, above, I have discussed two such criticisms: Kant condemned the commercial nations of his time for their colonial conquests, and he saw the international credit system as contributing to the war effort. I will not analyze Kant's more technical economic views. They are discussed in Susan Meld Shell, *The Rights of Reason: A Study of Kant's Philosophy and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp. 147–150.

2. This view is already displayed in the passage just cited from *On the Old Saw*, but see also *Justice*, p. 79 (VII: 120–21). Although Kant had in mind primarily, of course, domestic servants, apprentices of artisans, and farm laborers, his view concerning the economic dependence of the worker can be extended to the industrial worker.

3. Cf. Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State*, in Marx, *Early Writings*, edited by Quinton Hoare (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p. 194. A recent analysis of the legitimation problems embedded in repre-

sentative democracy is offered by Carole Pateman, *The Problem of Political Obligation* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1979).

4. Cf. Andrew Levine, *Arguing for Socialism* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), pp. 133–34. Levine also offers a good analysis of the legitimation problems posed by representative democracy.

5. Cf. Daniels, "Equal Liberty and Unequal Worth of Liberty," pp. 258–59; Daniels raises objections against Rawls which are similar to mine against Kant. To avoid misunderstanding, it should be noted that my arguments here do not assume that the wealthy always deliberately pursue their own self-interest; ideological distortion must also be taken into account.

6. Cf. Murphy, *Kant: The Philosophy of Right*, p. 146.

7. Cf. Chapter I, note 39, above.

8. *Reflexion* 8000, cited in *Materialien zu Kants Rechtsphilosophie*, pp. 51–52. Also cited in Williams, *Kant's Political Philosophy*, p. 197.

9. Cf. Schwarzschild, "Kantianism on the Death Penalty . . .," pp. 350ff.

10. This latter point is manifest in *Justice*, § 2, where Kant argues that the possibility of legal private property is a "juridical postulate of practical reason," because without this possibility "freedom would be robbing itself of the use of its will in relation to an object of the same will inasmuch as it would be placing usable objects outside all possibility of being used." This view is plausible with regard to some forms of personal property, but mistaken with regard to most forms of productive property.

11. In other words, my aim is not to argue that Kantian socialism constitutes the *only* logical reconstruction of Kant's practical philosophy; rather, I seek to show that it constitutes *a* possible and convincing reconstruction. See further the Preface. And, of course, the ultimate concern is the merits of Kantian socialism itself.

12. Cf. Howard Williams, "Kant's Concept of Property," *Philosophical Quarterly* 27 (1977): 32–40, p. 35. See also his *Kant's Political Philosophy*, pp. 81 ff.

13. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy*, translated by Joris de Bres (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), pp. 86 and 94. See also Karl Vorländer, *Kant und Marx* (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr, 1911), p. 31. We have seen in the previous chapter that Kant's legitimation of political obedience to the *de facto* powers points to resistance and revolution.

14. The three commentaries are *Kants Theorie der Erfahrung* (1871, 1885, 1918), *Kants Begründung der Ethik* (1877, 1910), and *Kants Begründung der Ästhetik* (1889).

15. This is the only major work of Cohen that has been translated into English, which reflects the fact that in the English-speaking world only his philosophical interpretation of Judaism has received ample philosophical attention. The situation is different in the German-speaking world, as is exemplified by such recent studies on Cohen's epistemology as Geert Edel's *Von der Vernunftkritik zur Erkenntnislogik* (Dissertation, Bonn, 1986) and Helmut Holzhey's *Cohen und Natorp*, 2 vols. (Basel: Schwabe,

1986); Cohen's practical philosophy is analyzed in Günther's *Philosophie des Fortschritts* (1972) and in Eggert Winter's *Ethik und Rechtswissenschaft: Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zur Ethik-Konzeption des Marburger Neukantianismus im Werke Hermann Cohens* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1980). Moreover, a new edition of the works of Cohen is in process of being published by the Hermann Cohen Archives at the University of Zurich. Finally, Cohen and the Marburg School have received adequate historical analysis in Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, and in Thomas E. Willey, *Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978).

16. My reason for this focus is that Cohen's socialism is most clearly developed in this period. This is not to say that I hold that there is some break between the Cohen of the second period and the Cohen of the third period. That there is such a break, in particular with regard to Cohen's conception of God, is often argued by scholars who are concerned mainly with his philosophical interpretation of Judaism. The practical effect has been that one limits one's attention to the Cohen of the third period and neglects the socialist dimension in his ethics and philosophy of religion. Cf. note 15, above. Cohen himself, however, saw a clear link between his socialist and moral-religious commitments. See *Pure Will*, p. 559, and "Critical Epilogue," pp. 279–80. The issue is further discussed in Schwarzschild's forthcoming Introduction to Cohen's *Religion of Reason*, as part of Cohen, *Werke*, published by the Hermann Cohen Archives (and Georg Olms Verlag). See also Schwarzschild's "'Germanism and Judaism'—Hermann Cohen's Normative Paradigm of the German-Jewish Symbiosis," in David Bronsen (ed.), *Jews and Germans from 1860 to 1933* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1979).

17. Cohen italicizes excessively throughout the *Pure Will*. Whenever no loss in meaning would be the result I have left out the italics.

18. The term 'community' (*Gemeinschaft*) has naturalistic overtones that are absent both in Cohen's use of this term and in his work as a whole. Like Kant, Cohen places society (*Gesellschaft*) above *Gemeinschaft*. Cf. Chapter I, note 37, above.

19. The phrase 'possessive individualism' is coined by C. B. Macpherson to characterize the liberal tradition rooted in Hobbes and Locke. Macpherson argues that, within this tradition, political society is seen as "a calculated device for the protection of [individual] property and for the maintenance of an orderly relation of exchange." See *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 3. Cohen also criticizes the liberal tradition for viewing history merely as the product of "powerful" individuals and argues that the result is that the real heroes of history—the "poor and tired"—are neglected. See *Pure Will*, p. 33. A similar moral motive can be detected behind the Marxian materialist conception of history and its critique of "liberal" history.

20. See "Critical Epilogue," pp. 298–302. It may be noted that Cohen wrote these pages in 1914. His (infamous) support of Germany during the First World War receives a balanced discussion in Keck, *Kant and Socialism*,

Chapter VIII, as well as in Schwarzschild, "'Germanism and Judaism' . . .," pp. 134 ff.

21. "Ethik und Sozialismus," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 29 (1909): 895–930, p. 910. (The first part of this review can be found in Vol. 25, pp. 573–612.)

22. See L. Roeloffs, *De Cooperatie, Maatschappelijk en Fiscaal Be-schouwd* (The Cooperative from a Social and Fiscal Point of View) (Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands: Samson, 1971), pp. 15 and 27, where Roeloffs points out that this conception of the cooperative is dominant in the American school as represented by J. V. Emelianoff and that Emelianoff criticizes such socialists as Franz Staudinger (one of Cohen's pupils) and W. Sombart for characterizing the cooperative instead as a union of persons. A synoptic history of the cooperative idea in socialist thought can be found in Winter, *Ethik und Rechtswissenschaft*, pp. 295–96n.

23. Such a contractarian understanding of Kant can also be found in Rawls, "Kantian Constructivism in Moral Theory," *Journal of Philosophy* 77 (1980): 515–72. It would be a worthwhile project, beyond the scope of my study, to compare Rawls's Kantianism with Cohen's. One striking difference, though, may be noted: only Rawls is explicitly concerned with distributive justice, but only Cohen comes to the conclusion that a socialization of the means of production is necessary. (For Rawls such a socialization is a mere possibility.) This difference reflects a broader one: socialists typically focus on the conditions of production, whereas (welfare) liberals typically focus on the conditions of distribution.

24. *Schriften zur Philosophie und Zeitgeschichte*, Volume II, p. 332. This essay on the right to vote is Cohen's reply to a questionnaire of the bi-weekly *Ethische Kultur* (1904). Cohen defends a similar view in *Pure Will*, p. 519.

25. In contrast to the Prussian lower chamber, the federal lower chamber (the *Reichstag*) was directly elected by all males over twenty-five years of age. The members of the federal upper house (*Bundesrat*) were appointed by the rulers of the different German states, although here, as elsewhere, the Prussian state had the decisive voice. The real political power resided in the king of Prussia (the Emperor of Germany) and in his appointed chancellor. See further John E. Rodes, *The Quest for Unity: Modern Germany 1848–1970* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), pp. 44–45 and 85–86. The role of the German Social Democratic Party in the struggle for democracy is discussed in Willey, *Back to Kant*, Chapter I. Willey also links this struggle to Kantian socialism.

26. See *Pure Will*, p. 588. This ranking is also suggested by the fact that Cohen calls the family a "relative community."

27. *Pure Will*, p. 584. Cohen does not explicitly mention that Plato prescribed the end of the institution of marriage only for warriors and philosopher kings, and it is precisely this fact that weakens somewhat his criticism of Plato. After all, the philosopher kings are the state, as it were, and, hence, they do not need a mediating institution. Nonetheless, it seems fair to say, as Cohen suggests, that Plato's ideal city has totalitarian

overtones. The classical source for this view is K. R. Popper's *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Volume I (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1945). In general, however, Cohen admires Plato, praising his ethical idealism and his method of moving from the collective ideal subject (the state) to the individual ideal subject. See *Pure Will*, pp. 7 and 14. See also *Reason and Hope*, pp. 66 ff.

28. See, respectively, *Religion of Reason*, p. 442, and *Pure Will*, p. 588. On the ground of faithfulness Cohen also rejects Plato's community of children. See *Religion of Reason*, p. 443. Cf. note 27, above.

29. Cf. William Kluback, *Hermann Cohen: The Challenge of a Religion of Reason* (Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1984; Brown Judaic Studies 53), p. 34.

30. The importance of the family as a transmitter of radical values is discussed in Kenneth Keniston, *Young Radicals* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968). Too many socialists tend to dismiss the family as a bourgeois institution. They fail to see that Marx attacked the bourgeois family rather than the family as such. Cf. Paul Corrigan and Peter Leonard, *Social Work Practice under Capitalism* (London: Macmillan, 1978), Chapter XI. Although Cohen recognizes the moral significance of the family, his view of the family is not altogether satisfactory. Cohen argues that it is instructive that the family is never defined as a legal person, adding the rhetorical question, "Would it have been the natural character of the family that has scared away the legal person?" See *Pure Will*, p. 78. This is by now a familiar point—the moral subject should not be constructed on a naturalistic basis—but one would expect Cohen to continue to argue that the family should move in the direction of the notion of the legal person, both morally and legally, thus overcoming its mere natural character. It is along these lines, I think, that a socialist conception of the family is to be developed, eliminating the patriarchal notion of the family (as in Kant), while sustaining the family as a source of moral commitment and value development in general.

31. Translation (except for minor changes) by Schwarzschild, " 'Germanism and Judaism' . . . ," pp. 146–47.

32. This demand was already set forth by F. A. Lange in the early 1860s. See Willey, *Back to Kant*, p. 94. The impact of Lange on the Marburg School is discussed by Willey as well as by Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, Chapter II. See also the Appendix, below.

33. "On Closing the Borders," in *Reason and Hope*, pp. 189–90. It is interesting to note that this essay was written during the First World War. Cf. note 20, above.

34. See note 32, above. For Lassalle's view, see Leszek Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume I, translated by P. S. Falla (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 238–44. The General German Workers Association united with Bebel and Liebknecht's Social Democratic Workingman's Party (1869) to form the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) (Gotha, 1875).

35. Cf. David Schweickart, *Capitalism or Worker Control?* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 4.

36. *Kant-Studien* 7 (1902): 23–84, p. 24. Cf. “Kant und der Sozialismus,” p. 363.

37. Yet Goldmann criticizes Cohen for taking the critical angle out of Kant. See *ibid.*, pp. 112 ff. Goldmann’s otherwise excellent study becomes at this point surprisingly superficial. He rightly notes that Cohen rejects Kant’s highest good, but fails to understand the reason for this (i.e., the privatistic and religious dimensions of the *summum bonum*). Goldmann also fails to see that Cohen puts socialism in the place of the highest good, and arrives at the absurd conclusions that Cohen brings Kant close to Stoicism and that an “apologetic spirit” lies at the basis of his work. A similar, albeit less pronounced, misunderstanding of Cohen can be found in Yovel’s *Kant and the Philosophy of History*; Yovel maintains that his own “substantive” reading of Kant could evolve only after he had freed himself of the “formalistic” neo-Kantian influence “originating in Hermann Cohen’s Marburg School” (p. ix).

38. Translated by John B. Askew from the fourth German edition (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1911), pp. 57–58. The first edition appeared in 1906.

39. Braverman cites the words “animated tool of the management” from a critical editorial in the *International Molders Journal*. See *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), p. 136. Taylorism also was introduced in the Soviet Union under Lenin. See Carmen Sirianni, *Workers Control and Socialist Democracy: The Soviet Experience* (London: Verso Editions and NLB, 1982). Sirianni extensively criticizes Lenin for thinking that a socialist society could be realized on the basis of capitalist industrial organization and management (pp. 253 ff.). Cf. *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, pp. 22–23.

40. Cf. Richard T. De George, *Business Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), p. 82.

41. My claim is not that moral responsibility always can and should be linked with legal liability, but rather, that we should create social conditions that make this link as close as possible. Strict liability for (consumer) goods may seem to be a notable exception. Yet even here it seems that fairness demands that the burden be shared by society at large. Certainly, this was Marx’s view. In *Critique of the Gotha Program*, he argues that within socialist society all workers must contribute equally to “a reserve or insurance fund [for] accidents, disruptions caused by natural calamities, etc.” See *The First International and After*, p. 344.

42. A recent powerful condemnation of American capitalism along these lines can be found in Harold Freeman, *Toward Socialism in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1982).

43. Cf. Schwarzschild’s Introduction to *Pure Will*, p. viii. Cohen emphasizes this “methodic” link rather than the practical link that I discuss below. My reason for reversing the emphasis is that the practical link has more critical potential. The “methodic” link receives extensive discussion in Holzhey, *Cohen und Natorp*, Volume I, pp. 318 ff.

44. Translated by Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

45. The distinction between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom is hinted at in the *Grundrisse*, p. 706, and further developed in *Capital*, Volume III (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 820.

46. Cf. Schweickart, *Capitalism or Worker Control?* pp. 58 ff.

47. That Cohen held such a view follows from his condemnation of the division of labor as destroying the "unity of culture." His claim that we must all become concerned with science points in the same direction (*Wissenschaft* includes both natural and humanistic sciences). For Cohen's view of the importance of art for full human development, see Günther, *Philosophie des Fortschritts*, pp. 63 ff. For Marx's plea for the all-round individual, see, for example, *The German Ideology*, p. 53.

48. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1971.

49. Cf. Herbert Marcuse, *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972), pp. 60 ff., where Marcuse argues that the environment created by modern capitalism stimulates aggression and obstructs esthetic experiences, and the like. The deeper problem with Weisskopf's analysis is that he puts too much emphasis on attitudinal change as the road toward a more humane economy. Weisskopf concludes his book by stating that we all must take "seriously the Kantian maxim that men should never be used as means but always as 'ends.'" I fully agree, but I also hope to have shown that this implies a more "structural" approach toward social change.

50. Cf. Hermann Lübke, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland: Studien zu ihrer Geschichte* (Basel: Schwabe, 1963), p. 108. (Lübke offers a brief but adequate overview of Marburg socialism.)

51. Translated by Henry Maas (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1973).

52. See *ibid.*, p. 96. Goldmann specifically mentions the Yugoslavian "social experiment" and says that it "may perhaps lay the foundations of a synthesis of the socialist-historical consciousness with individual freedom and toleration." Some shortcomings of the Yugoslavian market socialism are discussed in Schweickart's *Capitalism or Worker Control?*

53. Cf. R. Selucky, "Marxism and Self-management, in Jaroslav Vanek, editor, *Self-management* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Education, 1975), pp. 47 ff.

54. Cf. Marcel van Herpen, *Marx en de Mensenrechten* (Marx and Human Rights) (Weesp, Netherlands: Het Wereldvenster, 1983), p. 166. It would be a mistake, however, to argue that Marx's social critique applies only to a capitalist market economy. I will soon point out that there are significant problems embedded in the market system as such, and it is clear that at least part of Marx's social critique of capitalism applies to these problems. The issue is further discussed in Allen Buchanan, *Ethics, Efficiency, and the Market* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Allanheld, 1985), pp. 106 ff.

55. Cf. Buchanan, *Ethics, Efficiency, and the Market*, p. 104. A short historical and systematic overview of various market-socialist models can be found in Vanek's Introduction to *Self-management*.

56. Cf. Edward Sankowski's book review of Schweickart's work in *Ethics* 93 (1983): 624–25.

57. Schweickart hardly offers a moral theory that supports his model of market socialism, but rather attempts to show, as he himself says, that this model is superior to capitalism in terms of a "set of widely shared values" (*ibid.*, p. ix). The strength of his approach is clear. A weakness, however, is that it seems to make Schweickart—notwithstanding his acknowledgment of various problems inherent to his model—too confident about how far "economistic" solutions can lead us toward a truly cooperative socialist society. See *ibid.*, pp. 219–20. I will argue in the next chapter that Marx made a similar mistake.

Chapter VII

1. See "Excerpts from James Mill's *Elements of Political Economy*," in *Early Writings*, pp. 260 ff.

2. See Chapter VI, note 16, above.

3. It is, of course, true that Kant also postulated God in order to bridge the gap between universal virtue and universal happiness, but, as I have argued in Chapter II, section 2, above, the main systematic function of this postulate in his work is to bridge the gap between the natural order and the moral order in general. For Cohen's view, see, for example, *Pure Will*, pp. 440 ff., and *Religion of Reason*, pp. 410 ff. A brief discussion of Cohen's view can be found in Nathan Rotenstreich, *Jewish Philosophy in Modern Times* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1968), Chapter IV.

4. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, 1972, p. xii.

5. Not too much meaning should be given to Marx's use of the term 'categorical imperative'. What is more significant is that Marx condemns here any situation in which human beings are treated as means only, i.e., as less than a dog.

6. See my discussion of the essays of Atwell and Hill, Chapter I, section 3, above.

7. Thus Marx contends that the worker under capitalism is alienated from his fellow beings, his product, his labor activity, the state, etc. Marx also held that the capitalist is alienated, although that issue receives little systematic attention in his work. See *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, in *Early Writings*, p. 366. See also Bertell Ollman, *Alienation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971, 1976), Chapter 23.

8. Andrew Levine also argues that there are some links between Kant's notions of autonomy and heteronomy and Marx's concepts of self-determination and alienation, although Levine stresses the heteronomy-alienation link. See his "Alienation as Heteronomy," *Philosophical Forum* 8 (1978): 256–268. One difference between our analyses is that Levine argues that "in Marx's hands, the Kantian notions of autonomy and heteronomy are not primarily ascribed to actions nor even persons, but to societies. Even in his early writings, while still a Kantian, Marx breaks with the

extreme individualism of Kantian moral philosophy" (*ibid.*, p. 259). To say the least, this view of Kant is debatable. Cf. Konstantin Kolenda, "Kant and Racism," *Proceedings of the Third International Kant Congress*, where Kolenda observes that "[t]he locus of moral phenomena for Kant is the human soul or mind, [but] [t]his inner dialogue is obviously metaphorical, [and] there seems to be no reason why Kant's analysis of the moral situation could not be broadened to include *interpersonal* dialogue or debate" (*ibid.*, p. 363). On my account, however, we not only *can* but *should* make this "extension." In addition, I have argued in Chapter I above that we should see Kant's social critique as concerned with heteronomous societies.

9. Robert Nozick makes this point in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 253. In contrast to some other critics, however, such as Milton Friedman, Nozick also seriously considers the possibility that the issue at stake is control over the means of production. For Friedman's view, see *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1982), p. 167. For some other examples of critics who assume that exploitation for Marx is primarily a distributive notion, see Allen E. Buchanan, *Marx and Justice* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1982), p. 44. My rebuttal of this view is indebted to Buchanan's analysis. Furthermore, it is to be noted that the assumption is not only made by opponents of Marx, but also guides to various degrees some of his sympathizers. One example is G. A. Cohen's "The Labor Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation," in *Marx, Justice, and History*, edited by M. Cohen, T. Nagel, and T. Scanlon (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980). Buchanan's book and Cohen's paper are reviewed in my "Marx and Morality: An Impossible Synthesis?," *Theory and Society* 13 (1984): 119-135, from which I draw some of my arguments in the present chapter.

10. That Marx did not view capitalist society as economically unjust is argued in great detail in Allen W. Wood, "The Marxian Critique of Justice," in *Marx, Justice, and History*. Wood partly bases himself on Robert C. Tucker, "Marx and Distributive Justice," *Nomos VI: Justice* (New York: Atherton Press, 1963).

11. Cf. Tucker, "Marx and Distributive Justice," p. 310.

12. *Marx, Justice, and History*, p. 59. Husami also cites several passages from Marx's work that show that Marx held that capitalism is unjust. Cf. note 47 below.

13. Cf. Cohen, "The Labor Theory of Value and the Concept of Exploitation," pp. 142ff.

14. Cf. Tucker, "Marx and Distributive Justice," pp. 310ff., where Tucker discusses Proudhon and Lassalle's view of economic justice. Tucker fails to note, however, that Marx not only criticized their view but also accepted it in modified form.

15. Thus Cohen typically argues that, although it is misguided to criticize socialism as being concerned with the *Magenfrage* (the question of the stomach), it must also be said that "from the very beginning this

question must be related to the issue of spiritual development and, hence, to the issue of moral freedom" (*Pure Will*, p. 311; cf. p. 295).

16. In "Scientific Socialism and the Question of Socialist Values," in *Marx and Morality*, Supplementary Volume VII of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* (1981), edited by K. Nielsen and Steven C. Patten, Andrew Collier argues that humanist (ethical) socialism contains within it the danger of repression designed to bring about truly human capacities, whereas scientific socialism has the merit of avoiding this pitfall because it orients itself toward the actual desires and values of the working class. Although Collier's contention is partly based on terminological abuse—he detects, for example, "humanistic" arguments in Gorky's defense of Stalin's oppression of homosexuals, as well as in Austrian Marxism, Gramsci, and the Khmer Rouge—I do not wish to dismiss his contention altogether. What it shows is that the socialist struggle must reflect on the means by which the ideal can be reached. Typically, humanist socialism (in the proper sense of the word) has performed this task, and, certainly, Hermann Cohen's ethical socialism excludes repression for the sake of the ideal, because it holds that socialism can be reached only through autonomy. (Forced autonomy is a contradiction in terms.) Collier's essay is discussed in more detail in my "Marx and Morality: An Impossible Synthesis?"

17. This view is developed in Part I of *The German Ideology*. My interpretation here is indebted to Buchanan's, *Marx and Justice*, pp. 27 ff.

18. Cf. Buchanan, *Marx and Justice*, pp. 34–35.

19. See *Capital*, Volume I (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 10, where Marx states that although he "paint[s] the capitalist and the landlord in no sense *colour de rose*," it is also the case that: "My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural [!] history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them."

20. See Jeffrie G. Murphy, "Marxism and Retribution," in *Marx, Justice, and History*.

21. Cf. Buchanan, *Marx and Justice*, pp. 165ff.

22. In *Critique of the Gotha Program*, p. 345, Marx states that "[w]ithin the cooperative society based on common ownership of the means of production the producers do not exchange their products." For Marx's view that the political and legal state will wither away, see "After the Revolution: Marx Debates Bakunin," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Here Marx claims that the state will keep some administrative functions, but at other places in his work he even suggests that the state will disappear altogether in the communist society. See *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 347. For a more detailed discussion, see Bertell Ollman, *Social and Sexual Revolution* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), Essay 3, "Marx's Vision of Communism." See also Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume I, p. 360.

23. Two such conflicting suggestions are an economy with a plan versus an economy without any regulation (i.e., spontaneous exchange of goods in a society of abundance), and material production as a realm of necessity versus material production as the total embodiment of our species nature. See also note 22 above.

24. Cf. Eugene Kamenka, *Marxism and Ethics* (London: Macmillan, 1969), p. 12; Kamenka states that Marx's notion of freedom or self-determination signifies a Kantian strain in Marx, but that it is a "simplified, Prometheanized Kant."

25. Both Tucker and Wood (see note 10, above) use this passage to support their view that Marx did not see capitalism as unjust, failing to recognize the Hegel-rooted optimism in Marx.

26. Marx said these words in a speech in London in 1852. The speech was published in the Chartist *People's Paper*. See *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 578.

27. Marx continues to state that Bauer will be surprised "when the infamous 'masses' will shout *ça ira, ça ira* and suspend 'self-consciousness' by means of the lamp-post." Like the *Marseillaise* and *Carmagnole*, *Ça ira* was a popular song during the French Revolution; its refrain was: "Ah! *ça ira, ça ira, ça ira. Les aristocrates à la lanterne!*" See *ibid.*, pp. 638–39.

28. "The British Rule in India," *New York Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1853, reprinted in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 658.

29. Cf. Kate Currie, "The Asiatic Mode of Production: Problems of Conceptualising State and Economy," *Dialectical Anthropology* 8 (1984): 251–268, p. 257. Currie also notes that Marx's view of India before the British colonization as a despotic, unchangeable, and simplistic society rooted in small agricultural communities is similar to Hegel's view in *The Philosophy of History*. Cf. Victor Kiernan, "Marx and India," *The Socialist Register* 1967 (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 162. Kiernan also makes the interesting observation (p. 160) that Marx in response to the Indian Mutiny wrote that "[t]here is something in human history like retribution; and it is a rule of historical retribution that its instrument be forged not by the offended, but by the offender himself." We have seen that this "rule" is also manifest in the capitalist mode of production, in that Marx argues that the capitalists create the weapons of their own destruction, besides creating their own executioner, the proletariat.

30. *The Revolutions of 1848*, edited by David Fernbach (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), pp. 221–22 and pp. 229–30. The first quote comes from an article entitled "The Magyar Struggle," published on January 13, 1849; the second quote is from "Democratic Pan-Slavism," published on February 15, 1849 in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Cf. note 50, below.

31. Translation (with a minor revision) by Schwarzschild, "The Democratic Socialism of Hermann Cohen," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 27 (1956): 417–438, p. 420. This paper also discusses Cohen's critique of historical materialism.

32. We may see Cohen commenting here on Marx's statement, cited earlier, that "once the lightning of thought has struck deeply into [the]

virgin soul of the [German] people, emancipation will transform the *German*s into *men*." This dialectical schema of sudden enlightenment is rooted in Platonic mysticism, although liberation is transposed from the individual to the collective level. Hegel's system was strongly influenced by this mysticism. See further Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume I, Chapter I, "The Origins of Dialectic."

33. See "Critical Epilogue," pp. 293ff. See also the Appendix, below.

34. See respectively, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 355, and *Capital*, Volume I, pp. 18–19. For Habermas's view, see his *Knowledge and Human Interest*, translated by Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 46.

35. *Theory and Practice*, translated by John Viertel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 169.

36. In light of this, and the Kantian elements in Habermas in general, it is ironical that he states in *Communication and the Evolution of Society*, translated by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979), p. 97, that "the melodies of ethical socialism have played through without result." These melodies are the songs of Kantian socialism; for Habermas refers to Hans Jörg Sandkühler and Rafael de la Vega, editors, *Marxismus und Ethik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970, 1974), to substantiate his claim, and this reader contains selections from the works of the Marburg socialists and their critics. In general, Habermas is "out of tune" in downplaying the Kantian elements in his own work. For a brief discussion of these elements, see Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1978), pp. 325ff. and 379ff.

37. One such opponent is Sandkühler. See his "Kant, neukantianischer Sozialismus, Revisionismus," in *Marxismus und Ethik*. We will soon see that Cohen holds a plea for a "steady [permanent] revolution." Curiously enough, in citing Cohen, Sandkühler changes "*stetigen* [steady] *Revolution*" into "*stetigen Evolution*." See *ibid.*, p. 30. Sandkühler's view may be summed up in his approvingly quoting Plekhanov, who maintained that the bourgeoisie had an interest in promoting Kant's philosophy and hence, Kantian socialist ethics, because "they hoped to find in it an opiate to put the proletariat to sleep." See *ibid.*, p. 29. Some Cohen sympathizers who wrongly claim that he rejected revolution as such are Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, pp. 179 and 291; Lübke, *Politische Philosophie in Deutschland*, pp. 109–11; and, Willey, *Back to Kant*, p. 103.

38. Contra Cohen, it must be said that this motto alone does not establish that Hegel was conservative; for Hegel claims that the rational is *wirklich* (and vice versa), not *real*. Cohen's view, however, can be defended on other grounds (see Chapter III, note 36, above), and the main point here is that Hegel does not offer an evaluative perspective that is logically independent of the course of history.

39. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 577. Cf. note 26 above. Armand Barbès (1809–70) was a religious socialist who participated in French revolutionary politics from 1830 to 1848. At the time when Marx gave his speech Barbès was in jail (where he spent almost two decades of his life). François

Vincent Raspail (1794–1878) participated in revolutionary politics during the same period, wrote medical guides for the Paris working class, and engaged in jail reform (which he knew from the inside). The workers from Paris called him “father Raspail,” reflecting the warm esteem he received. A brief portrait of their lives can be found in H.P.G. Quack, *De Socialisten*, Volume III (Amsterdam: P. N. van Kampen & Zoon, 1922⁴), pp. 237–42 and 488–89. The life of Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805–81) and his impact on Marxist thought is briefly sketched in Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume I, pp. 214ff.

40. “Anamnestic Solidarity,” *Telos* 25 (1975): 133–54, p. 147. The statements from *The Eighteenth Brumaire* can be found in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 597. Lenhardt also rightly notes that, with the exception of the writings of the Frankfurt School, issues of intergenerational solidarity “have remained blank spots in the Marxian literature” (p. 152).

41. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 5. This view might even imply that emancipatory praxis must be suppressed; for improvements in the economic and social position of the working class may lead to less surplus extraction, slowing down the development of the productive forces. Cf. A. Anthony Smith, “Two Theories of Historical Materialism,” *Theory and Society* 13 (1984): 513–40, pp. 523–24; Smith launches a similar criticism against G. A. Cohen’s defense of historical materialism. Marx also suggests that social action may hasten the inevitable downfall of capitalism (see note 42, below), but he does not explain how this can be squared with the statement just cited.

42. See *Capital I*, p. 10, where Marx maintains that his study seeks to discover the economic law of modern society and that, once this law is known, society cannot suddenly realize a new society, but “can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs.”

43. Buchanan also considers the possibility that rational behavior is the maximization of class interest, and argues that in this case the public-goods objection holds as well. He pays, however, much less attention to this case than to that in which rational behavior is the maximization of self-interest, and for a good reason: only the latter case seems to fit with Marx’s view, or, at least, an aspect thereof.

44. We must, of course, be careful, as Buchanan is, in ascribing descriptive validity to a normative model. The conclusion here stated assumes that utilitarian considerations play an important role in our lives. On the whole, this seems a reasonable assumption.

45. Cf. Gregory S. Kavka, “Two Solutions to the Paradox of Revolution,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, Volume VII, edited by P. A. French, T. E. Uehling, Jr., and H. K. Wettstein (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). My two reasons parallel Kavka’s two solutions for revolutionary action as a public-goods problem, and, accordingly, my discussion contains an implicit critique of his view. It is to be noted, however, that Kavka is concerned not with the socialist revolution but rather with explaining how revolution in general can occur once we make such assump-

tions as that human agents are utility maximizers. Thus Kavka views special benefits to the revolutionary group as an aspect of solving the "paradox of revolution," whereas this aspect must be discounted if the concern is the socialist revolution.

46. Marx expressed these doubts in a personal letter to Ludwig Kugelmann, dated April 12, 1871. See Letter 204, in *The Letters of Karl Marx*, translated and introduced by Saul K. Padover (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1979). Cf. Fernbach's Introduction to *The First International and After*, p. 33. *The Civil War in France* was written during the later days of the Commune and printed almost immediately after its defeat. I will quote from both the final and first drafts as printed in *The First International and After*.

47. This passage, I think, shows that Marx viewed capitalism as a system both of economic injustice and of servitude, and that the emphasis is on the latter aspect. Cf. my analysis in section 1, above.

48. Yet Marx states on the same page that the workers of Paris "have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant." Now insofar as Marx simply makes the point here that mediation is important, there is nothing wrong with his statement. It seems, however, that here again the Hegelian dimension in his work is manifest. One way of explaining this is that Marx in this statement is reflecting on his practice of inquiry, and, as I will argue in section 4 below, his philosophical self-understanding is Hegelian in nature, though his practice of inquiry contains Kantian elements as well.

49. See Richard Grunberger, *Red Rising in Bavaria* (London: Arthur Barker, 1973), p. 37. See also the Appendix, below.

50. The contention that the notion of "duty-versus-interest" reflects a bourgeois moral psychology is made by Anthony Skillen, "Workers' Interest and the Proletarian Ethic: Conflicting Strains in Marxian Antimoralism," *Marx and Morality*, p. 162. Skillen offers a good analysis of the first strain of anti-moralism in Marx, which roughly corresponds to the Hegelian dimension in Marx. Skillen's discussion of this strain brought to my attention the two passages cited in note 30 above. The second strain Skillen detects concerns a "materialist ethics" —that is, ethics as a way of life, rooted in the passions, suffering, and joys of the proletariat. See *ibid.*, p. 166. Skillen's rather synoptic reconstruction of this strain brings him much closer to prescriptive ethics than he thinks, for he wrongly assumes that prescriptive ethics by its very nature is individualistic, not concerned with mediation, etc. Once these mistakes are eliminated, the second strain somewhat resembles the Kantian dimension in Marx, even though Skillen tends to romanticize proletarian values and feelings.

51. The notion of a class morality fails to satisfy this claim and is therefore to be rejected. Engels defended the idea of a class morality, arguing that that morality is correct "which, in the present, represents the overthrow of the present, represents the future, and therefore [this moral-

ity is] the proletarian morality." See *Anti-Dühring* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1976), p. 117. This is a backhanded way of justifying a moral viewpoint, and Engels here makes the error I point out below in the text.

52. It is tempting to include within this Marxian regulative idea concerning progress Marx's claim that socialism is possible through peaceful means. I can, however, detect no moral concern here on Marx's side; rather, his proposal seems to be motivated by purely instrumentalistic considerations. See "The Curtain Raised," *The First International and After*, p. 395. In this interview by a reporter from New York's *World* (July 18, 1871), Marx states with respect to the English condition: "Insurrection would be madness where peaceful agitation would more swiftly and surely do the work." Cf. Marx's speech in Amsterdam, on September 8, 1872, in which he said that there are countries, "such as America, England, and if I were more familiar with your institutions, I would perhaps add Holland, where the workers can attain their goal by peaceful means." See *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 523. Again, there is no indication that Marx held that this possibility was morally desirable.

53. *Labor and Monopoly Capital* was written in 1974. Some recent developments in the direction of economic democracy are discussed in Drew Christie, "Recent Calls for Economic Democracy," *Ethics* 95 (1984): 112–28, pp. 112–13.

54. Cf. Christie, "Recent Calls for Economic Democracy," pp. 112–13.

Notes: Appendix

1. See Vorländer, *Kant und Marx*, pp. 157–58. Cf. Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 260.

2. See his *Evolutionary Socialism*, translated by Edith C. Harvey (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), pp. 201 and 222–23.

3. *Die neue Zeit* was the traditional SPD organ; the revisionists started the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*.

4. *Austro-Marxism*, texts translated and edited by Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 64 and 68. Cf. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume II, pp. 274–75.

5. *Austro-Marxism*, pp. 51–52. Cf. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume II, pp. 275–76. Bauer's suggestion that Kantians such as Eisner contributed to weakening the revolutionary impulse of the working class is misplaced and insensitive, considering Eisner's role and fate in the Munich Revolution, especially since Bauer wrote these words in 1938 after the defeat of the working class by fascism.

6. Cf. Holzhey, *Cohen und Natorp*, Volume I, pp. 49–53; Holzhey offers a similar but more detailed description of the "connecting element of the Marburg School." Dimitry Gawronski sketches a fine portrait of Cohen as teacher and central figure in the Marburg School in his "Ernst Cassirer: His Life and His Work," *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp (Evanston, Ill.: Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), pp. 7–12. (Gawronski studied with Cohen in the early 1900's and was one

of the first who criticized the Bolshevik state from an ethical socialist perspective. See Schwarzschild, " 'Germanism and Judaism' . . . ," p. 141.)

7. See Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 70.

8. Cohen had earlier expressed his socialist commitment in *Kants Begründung der Ethik* (1877) as well as in several other works, but in a rather passing manner. Vorländer states in *Kant und Marx* (p. 179) that Bernstein wrote him in a personal letter that Cohen's Epilogue had influenced his interest in Kant. Cf. Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 260. Mehring was also familiar with Cohen's Epilogue. See note 33, below.

9. "Critical Epilogue," pp. 279–80. Cf. *Pure Will*, p. 559, where Cohen states that the politics of the prophets "is nothing other than what nowadays we call socialism." Cf. Chapter VI, note 16, above.

10. For a discussion of the career problems that Jews encountered in Wilhelminian Germany, see Peter Gay, *Freud, Jews and Other Germans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 114 ff.; Gay also touches upon the careers of Cassirer and Cohen. For a more detailed account of Cohen's career at Marburg, see Holzhey, *Cohen und Natorp*, volume I, pp. 1–3 and 20–22.

11. "Kant und der Sozialismus," p. 370. The two differences between Lange and the Marburgers are set forth in *Kant und Marx*, p. 120.

12. See Willey, *Back to Kant*, pp. 89 and 91. Cf. Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, pp. 51 and 54.

13. See Willey, *Back to Kant*, p. 91.

14. See *ibid.*, pp. 91–92. Cf. Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 55.

15. See Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 218. Keck provides what may be the only existing extensive bibliography of Vorländer's writings, covering 87 works.

16. See *ibid.*, p. 219. Vorländer expressed this desire in a personal letter to Bernstein in 1899. Vorländer was active in party politics in the 1920's and was elected to the Westphalian Diet. See Willey, *Back to Kant*, p. 175.

17. *Marxismus und Ethik*, p. 317. This reader contains a complete version of the systematic conclusion added to the second edition of *Kant und Marx*.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 319. Although Vorländer does not give a precise reference, we may assume that he is directing our attention to Engels's famous letters on historical materialism, written to Bloch, Mehring, and Starkenburg. Vorländer discusses these letters in *Karl Marx* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1929), pp. 288–90, and defends here his Kant-Marx synthesis along the same lines as in the second edition of *Kant und Marx*.

19. See Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 273.

20. See Vorländer, *Kant und Marx*, pp. 187 and 189.

21. *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx* (New York: Octagon Books, 1983), p. 160. Reprint of the Columbia University Press edition (1952, 1962).

22. Bernstein was one of Engels's closest friends and one of the executors of his will. Moreover, Engels entrusted his unpublished writings to

Bernstein and August Bebel. See *ibid.*, p. 68. Thus it is not surprising (although there are other reasons) that Bernstein frequently argued that his revisionism was in accord with a main tenet of Engels and Marx's social theory. This issue cannot be addressed here, but in view of my analysis of Chapter VII above of the Kantian elements in Marxian thought, it seems that Bernstein's contention has a *prima facie* plausibility.

23. See *Evolutionary Socialism*, pp. 79 ff. Cf. Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*, pp. 191 ff. Gay also detects a similar strength and weakness in Bernstein's work. See *ibid.*, pp. 298–99.

24. Cf. Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*, pp. 146 ff.

25. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 148. Cited from *Der Revisionismus in der Sozialdemokratie* (Amsterdam: Martin Cohen, 1909), p. 41.

26. Cf. my analysis in Chapter V, section 2. For Bernstein's view on the political mass strike, see Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*, pp. 237 ff. Considering the conditions under which Bernstein held that the mass strike is justified, he rightly called it "an economic weapon with an ethical object." See *ibid.*, p. 240.

27. See *Evolutionary Socialism*, p. 166. Also, the Marburgers could not but have applauded Bernstein's claim that "with respect to liberalism as a great historical movement, socialism is its legitimate heir" (*ibid.*, p. 149).

28. See *ibid.*, Chapter III, section (d). This section shows that Bernstein was influenced not only by Lange but also by the British cooperative movement and Fabian Socialism.

29. See *ibid.*, pp. xxix and 204. The critics of Bernstein interpreted his slogan literally and thus saw it as an instance of opportunism. Bernstein addresses this misunderstanding on the pages just cited.

30. See Gay, *The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*, p. 244.

31. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 297. The letter is dated Jan. 23, 1932.

32. Cf. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume II, p. 35, where he maintains that "[a] striking feature of Kautsky's work is the complete lack of understanding of philosophical problems. This harsh judgment is not without justification: Kautsky argued, for example, that Kant's view that the moral law is independent of experience is flawed because this law "assumes not only men outside of me, but also the wish that these fellow men should behave themselves in a particular manner." See *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*, p. 54. Although Mehring was better philosophically schooled, his Kant critique never reaches great depth.

33. "Kant und der Sozialismus" (1899/1900), in *Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig: Phillip Reclam, 1975), pp. 269 and 270. Cf. "Immanuel Kant" (1903/04), in *ibid.*, pp. 74–75.

34. See "Immanuel Kant," p. 75; "Kant und der Sozialismus," p. 270; and, "Kant, Dietzgen, Mach und der historische Materialismus" (1909/10), in *ibid.*, p. 291.

35. See "Die Neukantianer" (1899/1900), in *ibid.*, p. 280. See *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 491.

36. Cf. Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 274. Mehring displayed in his

early work such a reductionistic understanding of historical materialism (cf. below) that Engels felt obliged to correct him, writing him one of the well-known letters on historical materialism. See note 18, above. Cf. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Volume II, p. 58.

37. See *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*, Chapter V, sections 4 and 5.

38. "Kant und der Sozialismus," pp. 273–74. It characterizes the communist viewpoint of the editors of *Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie* that they add the note that "Mehring falters here—and elsewhere—in his judgment of the revisionist supporters of neo-Kantianism. He underestimates partly the damaging effect of neo-Kantian philosophical revisionism." See *ibid.*, p. 396n.

39. My biographical sketch of Eisner is based primarily on Grunberger's *Red Rising in Bavaria*, Chapter III, and Allan Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria 1918–1919* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), Chapter II. Mitchell offers the more scholarly but much less sympathetic discussion of Eisner and his work. Regrettably, Grunberger's study contains some factual errors.

40. See Keck, *Kant and Socialism*, p. 257.

41. See Vorländer, *Kant und Marx*, pp. 219–21. Cf. Willey, *Back to Kant*, pp. 177–78. Natorp expressed his approval of Eisner's articles in a letter to Görland, calling Eisner "our student." Natorp had earlier expressed his pleasure with the fact that Eisner as a "schooled Kantian" was offered a position at *Vorwärts* (see below). See, respectively, letters 84 and 45 in Holzhey, *Cohen und Natorp*, Volume II.

42. See Gary P. Steenson, "Not One Man! Not One Penny!": *German Social Democracy, 1863–1914* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1981), p. 134.

43. Eisner had incensed Kautsky by publicly defying his view that the class struggle would be more intense in a republic than in a monarchy and that therefore a republic is to be preferred. Their conflict came to a climax when *Vorwärts* did not fully support a mass strike in solidarity with the Russian Revolution of 1905. Under pressure Eisner and some revisionists resigned. Thus it is often concluded that Eisner was a pure revisionist. This conclusion is drawn, for example, by Steenson (see note 42, above) and by George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 293–95. Reprint of the Praeger edition of 1969. Mitchell convincingly shows that this interpretation is mistaken. See *Revolution in Bavaria 1918–1919*, pp. 49 ff. Mitchell's view accords with Vorländer, *Kant und Marx*, p. 221. We will soon see that Eisner did not in principle object to the political mass strike.

44. See Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria 1918–1919*, p. 120. My sketch of the Munich Revolution is based primarily on this study and on Grunberger's *Red Rising in Bavaria*.

45. See Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria 1918–1919*, p. 269. Cf. Grunberger, *Red Rising in Bavaria*, p. 78.

46. See Grunberger, *Red Rising in Bavaria*, pp. 71–72.

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INDEX

- Action, limits of, 74, 77, 88, 111, 254
- Adler, Max, 292–93, 297
- Alienation, 121, 163, 214, 242, 246, 251–52, 337n.7
 - and heteronomy, 245, 337n.8
 - and the moral law, 255, 283
- All-round individual, 234, 239, 251, 253, 336n.47
- American Revolution, 178, 280, 328n.16
- Analogy of experience (third), 23, 313n.37
- Anamnestic solidarity, 128–33, 269–70
- Anchor, Robert E., 325n.1
- Anger
 - moral anger (indignation), 53–56, 64, 99, 112, 173, 190, 264
 - of oppressed human nature, 55–56, 187
- Annihilation of civilization, 74, 112, 142, 193, 194
- Antinomy of practical reason, 65–69, 75–77, 81–86, 89, 90, 309n.2, 317n.24
- Arendt, Hannah, 103–4, 122–28, 322n.37, 328n.24
- Atwell, John E., 31, 312n.32
- Aune, Bruce, 313n.36
- Austro-Marxism, 292–93
- Autonomy, 10–11, 44, 46–47, 59, 133, 140, 198, 339n.16
 - conditions of, 21, 32, 34, 37, 39, 154, 162, 187, 202, 203, 220, 250, 267, 299–300
 - and grounding of hope for progress, 98–99
 - and moral commitment, 51–53, 64
 - and moral education, 39
 - and self-determination (Marx), 250–53, 255, 283, 337n.8
 - as social concept, 32, 337n.8
 - as task, 32, 98, 206–7. *See also* Legislative self
 - in the workplace, 225, 234, 238, 285. *See also* Economic democracy
- Auxter, Thomas, 316n.23
- Avineri, Shlomo, 121, 321nn.30,31
- Barbès, Armand, 269, 341n.39
- Basedow school, 8, 12
- Bauer, Bruno, 262, 340n.27
- Bauer, Otto, 292, 293, 344n.5
- Baumgarten, Alexander, 6
- Bavarian People's Party (BVP), 305
- Bebel, August, 300, 334n.34, 345n.22
- Beck, Lewis White, 78–79, 214, 315n.9, 325n.2, 326n.5, 327nn.9, 10,12,15
- Beiner, Ronald, 122, 123, 125, 322n.37
- Berdyyayev, Nikolay, 292
- Berlin, Isaiah, 111–12
- Bernstein, Eduard, 291–92, 293, 298–301, 303, 304, 307, 345nn.8, 22, 346nn.26,27,29
- Blanc, Louis, 248
- Blanqui, Louis-Auguste, 269
- Bloch, Ernst, 193
- Bolshevism, 297, 300, 344n.6
- Bourgeoisie. *See* Capitalists
- Braverman, Harry, 227, 232, 287
- Buchanan, Allen E., 273–77, 284, 313n.39, 336n.54, 338n.9, 342nn.43,44

- Campbell, Tom, 325n.17
- Capital
- accumulation of, 246, 286, 287
 - and alienation, 245, 251–52
 - as heteronomous law, 225, 226, 227, 230, 250
 - See also* Profit maximization
 - personification of, 226–27
- Capitalism
- Cohen's (Kantian socialist)
 - critique of, 213, 223–31, 233–35, 250
 - and Kant, 113, 115, 143, 162, 191, 198–205, 330n.1
 - Marx's critique of, 227, 244–50, 255, 262, 274, 277, 283, 284–85, 336n.54, 338nn.10,12, 343n.47
 - Marx's prediction of its collapse
 - as dogmatic idea, 256, 259–72, 283, 288–89, 292, 293, 296, 298, 301
 - and grounding of hope for progress, 97, 259, 267–68, 272–73, 278–79, 289
 - as regulative idea, 272–79, 289
- Capitalists
- alienation of, 337n.7
 - competition among, 227, 258–59, 274
 - and historical retribution, 261, 262, 340n.29
 - Marx's praise of, 269
 - and moral blame, 225, 253, 339n.19
- Cassirer, Ernst, 294, 311n.18, 345n.10
- Categorical imperative, 14, 128, 176, 186, 191, 208, 209–12, 213–14, 313n.36, 328n.22, 329n.27
- autonomy formula of, 19, 32
 - Cohen on, 29, 311n.18. *See also* *under* Kant's ethics
 - and duty to promote the highest good, 18–38, 52–53, 76–77, 78, 310n.12
 - humanity-as-an-end-in-itself
 - formula of, 19, 28–31, 125, 223
 - natural-law formula of, 22–28, 184, 311n.26, 312n.27
 - realm-of-ends formula of, 32
 - and socialism, 223–25, 293, 301, 303
 - universal-law formula of, 19–22, 26, 182–83, 184, 187
- Christie, Drew, 344n.53
- Church (religious institutions), 12, 155–57, 160, 162, 189, 208, 216, 218, 220, 324n.13
- Citizen, active vs. passive, 198–99, 200, 216
- Civil disobedience, 182–83, 192, 277, 328n.22
- Class morality, 343n.51
- Cohen, G.A., 338n.9
- Cohen, Hermann
- career of, 205–6, 294–95, 344n.6, 345n.10
 - and East European Jews, 221
 - neglect of his work, viii, 331n.15
 - patriotism of, 217, 332n.20
 - socialist commitment of, 265, 294, 332n.16, 345n.8
 - three stages of his work, 205–6, 332n.16
- Collier, Andrew, 339n.16
- Colonialism, 115, 120, 161, 262–63, 330n.1, 340n.29
- Comintern, 271
- Command-planning economy, 236–37, 238
- Communication, moral importance of, 36–37, 128, 163, 313n.41
- Communist individual (Marx), 248, 251–52, 254, 255. *See also* All-round individual; Self-determination
- Communist party (Marx), 276
- Communist society (Marx), 233, 234, 249–50, 251, 253–55, 301, 340n.23
- beyond justice and rights, 248, 254
 - beyond the moral law, 224, 248, 254, 255, 267
 - stages of, 246, 247–48, 252, 267
 - and the state, 254, 265, 339n.22
 - See also* Socialist Society
- Community of legislators.
- See* Moral society
- Consequentialism, 38
- Conservatism, 15–16

- Consumerism, 233–34
- Cooperative, 208, 221, 225, 227, 228, 239, 295, 300, 333n.22
 as community of scientific producers, 230, 232–33, 235
 and legal person, 210–13, 214, 222
 and the state, 217, 218, 219, 220, 225
- Cosmopolitanism, 115, 211, 221, 306
- Curie, 62, 63, 175, 178, 253, 280, 315n.15. *See also* Punishment
- Culture
 of discipline, 11, 105, 137, 139–40, 141, 173, 188, 323n.2
 as “glittering misery,” 107, 112, 139
 of skill, 137–39, 141, 188
 unity of, 229–30, 232
- Cunning of communism, 261–63, 340n.29
- Cunning of nature, 98, 104–5, 158, 160, 190, 272–73, 280, 319n.12
 and grounding of hope for progress, 92, 95–96, 106, 134, 142–52, 165, 179, 191
 morality of, 106, 120, 121–22, 322n.38
- Cunning of reason, 261, 319n.12
- Currie, Kate, 340n.29
- Daniels, Norman, 324n.8, 331n.5
- Danton, 172
- Democracy (political), 36, 110, 215, 313n.42, 329nn.33,34, 330n.3, 331n.4
 direct vs. representative, 37, 199–200, 219, 281
 and socialism, 164, 205, 219, 231, 235, 238, 295, 300, 305, 346n.27
 See also Ideal state; Republican state
- Despair, 17, 87, 131, 138, 145, 190, 253, 267, 287
 distinguished from pessimism, 97–98
 duty to overcome, 96, 98–99, 132, 193–94
- Despotic moralist, 171–72, 271
- Dignity, 45, 55, 104, 122–28, 133, 269, 322n.38
- Division of labor, 105, 135, 137, 138, 227, 229–30, 258, 287
 overcoming of, 222, 230, 232–33, 252, 253, 284–85, 336n.47
- Dogmatic metaphysics, 10, 83, 111, 232, 268, 291, 296, 309n.8. *See also under* Reason; Teleology
- Doyle, Michael, 329n.34
- Duties of justice, 158, 159, 161, 324n.15
 distinguished from duties of virtue, 14, 156, 324n.16
- Duty of beneficence, 21–22, 35, 41, 62–63, 80–81, 163, 313n.39, 318n.31
- Duty to develop one’s talents, 29, 31, 39–41
- Duty to tell the truth, 186–87, 329n.28
- Economic boycott, 228
- Economic democracy, vii, 222, 231, 232, 235, 237–39, 282, 286, 287, 344n.53. *See also* Cooperative
- Economic efficiency, 233–34
- Economic growth, 234–35, 238
- Economic imperialism, 162, 192, 329n.34
- Economic inequality, 63, 137–38, 146, 161–62, 164, 187, 200–201, 219, 231, 239, 248, 274, 279, 287. *See also* Exploitation; Immiseration
- Economic justice, 234–35, 247, 324n.15, 333n.23,
 Kantian principle of, 250, 338n.15
 Marx’s principle of, 247–48, 249, 338n.14
- Education, 8, 150, 192, 202, 216, 231, 235, 280, 285, 329n.33
- Eisner, Kurt, 282, 292, 293, 302–6, 323n.40, 344n.5, 347nn.41,43
- Engels, Friedrich, 16, 78, 263, 268, 285, 296, 297, 343n.51, 345n.22, 346n.36
- England, 179, 221, 262–63, 274, 327n.10
- Enlightenment, 105, 107, 127, 157, 190, 236, 320n.14
- Ethical commonwealth, 153–56, 160
- Eurocentrism, 115

- Exploitation, 135, 138, 227, 246–49,
338nn.9,10, 340n.25, 343n.47
- External purposiveness (of nature),
135–36, 140
- Faithfulness, 217, 334n.28
- Family, 37, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220,
334n.30
- Federation of states. *See* Peace
- Feudalism, 199, 203, 226
- Final end of creation, 134, 140–41,
169, 175, 323n.3
- First International, 63, 315n.16
- First World War, 304, 306, 332n.20
- Frankfurt School, 241, 342n.40
- Free Corps, 306
- Freedom
of conscience, 149–51, 176
of expression, 36–37, 175–76, 201,
202
external freedom, 8, 11, 21, 23, 36
107–8, 139, 154, 155, 157, 180,
188, 205, 310n.17. *See also*
Autonomy, conditions of;
Republican state; Rights
of the will (choice), 43, 47, 105,
139, 326n.5
- Free institutions, moral importance
of, 36, 139, 173
- Freeman, Harold, 335n.42
- French Revolution, 25–26, 176–79,
185, 208, 266, 311n.24, 328n.16,
340n.27
as sign of progress, 12, 57–60,
126–27, 138, 145–46, 152,
166–75, 189, 190, 191, 280, 282
and terror, 119, 172, 315n.12
- Friedman, Milton, 338n.9
- Friedrich, Carl J., 311n.24, 329n.34
- Fuller, Lon L., 35–36
- Galston, William A., 103, 104, 116,
121–22, 320n.25
- Gay, Peter, 298, 345n.10
- Gawronski, Dimitry, 344n.6
- General German Workers Associa-
tion, 221–22, 334n.34
- Genesis, book of, 106, 187
- German Communist Party (KPD),
305, 306
- German Social Democratic Party
(SPD), 299, 333n.25
- Dresden congress of, 300, 301
- Erfurt Program of, 298
- Gotha Program of, 246, 247, 249,
334n.34
and Kantian socialists, 215, 265,
267, 291, 292, 293, 295, 296,
301–2, 303–4, 305, 306
- Germany, 176, 215, 219, 221, 265, 267,
294, 295, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303,
304–6, 333n.25
- God, 81, 86, 97, 88, 117, 118, 120,
157, 243
postulate of existence of, 33, 66,
67, 68, 69, 75, 77, 81–86, 87,
243, 316n.18
- Goldmann, Lucien, 13, 208, 224,
236–37, 320n.14, 327n.11,
335n.37, 336n.52
- Good will, 11, 108, 109, 126, 134, 139,
140, 141, 142, 167, 172, 173
- Görland, Albert, 292
- Gradualism, 170–72, 267–68, 270,
287, 295, 299
- Grunberger, Richard, 347n.39
- Günther, Henning, 230, 313n.37,
332n.15, 336n.47
- Habermas, Jürgen, 129–30, 131, 241,
265–66, 288, 313n.41,
323nn.42,45, 329n.32, 341n.36
- Happiness, Kant's conception of,
46, 66–67, 69–71, 102–3, 107, 132,
136, 251, 316n.21
- Hassner, Pierre, 312n.35
- Hegel, G.W.F., 17, 242, 321nn.29,30,
31, 340n.32
Cohen on, 268, 341n.38
compared with Kant, 100, 110,
116–22, 319n.12, 320n.13,
322n.36, 326n.5
impact on Marx, 260–63, 268–69,
270–71, 340n.29
- Henrich, Dieter, 327nn.10,15
- Heteronomy, 51–53, 225–26, 227,
245, 283
as social concept, 32, 245, 337n.5
- Highest good (*summum bonum*)
Cohen on, 316n.23, 335n.37
definitions of, 3, 65, 75–76, 79
as duty to reduce suffering,
74–75, 78, 316n.22
as duty to the victims of in-
justice, 18, 131, 132, 133

- as final end of creation, 140–41
- four functions of, 38
- and individual duties, 34, 38–41
- and life plan, 17–18, 50
- as mere object of hope, 15, 16, 78
- personal highest good, 51, 87, 141.
- See also Justice
- (*Gerechtigkeit*); Moral faith
- promotion vs. realization of, 4, 6, 82–83, 318n.35
- as social duty, vii, 3, 5, 9, 12–13, 18, 22, 31, 50, 51, 79, 159, 160, 189, 310n.17. See also under
- Categorical imperative
- two conceptions of, 4, 27–28, 33, 42–43, 68, 69, 75–79, 316n.23, 317nn.24,25
- See also Moral society
- Highest political good, 92, 138, 139
- and cunning of nature, 134, 142–45, 152, 191
- relation to moral society, 100–101, 109, 139, 141, 153, 157–64
- Hill, Thomas E., Jr., 31, 186, 312n.32
- Historical amnesia, 286
- History
- justification of, 100, 105, 111–12, 116–22, 260–61, 263, 268–69
- liberal conception of, 332n.19
- natural vs. rational, 99–100, 109, 143, 145–46, 153, 264–65
- reconstruction of, 93, 95, 100, 114, 319n.3
- Holiness, 10, 49, 71, 72, 127, 160, 170–71
- Holzhey, Helmut, 335n.43, 344n.6, 345n.10
- Hope for progress
- distinguished from optimism, 97–98, 307
- as duty, 95, 96–97, 98–99, 114, 169, 193–94
- grounding of, 89–90, 93–96, 99–100, 114–15. See also under
- Autonomy; Capitalism;
- Cunning of nature; Moral
- progress
- relevance for social action, 12, 17, 88–90, 92–99, 114, 115, 117, 144–45, 273
- Horkheimer, Max, 130–31
- Humanity, idea of, 29–31, 104, 124–28, 206, 245
- Human nature, 9, 31, 101–2, 245, 251, 257
- ethicization of, 27, 48, 62, 71–73, 107, 173, 210
- open character of, 27, 101, 102–3, 137
- Husami, Ziyad I., 248–49, 338n.12
- Ideal state (Cohen), 208, 212, 215–21, 231, 235, 254
- Ideology, 149, 279, 331n.5
- Immiseration, 256, 259, 260, 274–75, 279, 303
- Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USDP), 304, 305, 306
- India, 262–63, 340n.29
- Interruptions of progress (Kant), 93, 188, 193, 299
- Jaurès, Jean, 292
- Job, book of, 87, 314n.4
- Justice (*Gerechtigkeit*), Kant's principle of, 77, 79–81, 318n.31
- Justice (*Recht*), Kant's principle of, 157–58, 180, 181, 188, 200, 324n.15
- Kamenka, Eugene, 244, 340n.24
- Kant, Immanuel
- enthusiasm for liberal revolutions, 178–79, 325n.2, 327n.16
- life style of, 17–18
- “originator of German socialism” (Cohen), vii, 301
- Kant's ethics
- compared with Cohen's, 38, 127, 164, 197, 206, 208–9, 213–14, 216, 218, 219, 311n.26
- dialogical, 37, 128
- monological, 36, 313n.41
- and private ethics, 14–18, 34, 38–41, 79, 225, 310n.12
- progressive nature of, 10, 16–17
- and radical moral anger, 56
- relation to his epistemology, 10
- and rigorism, 25, 186–87
- and social ethics, 6, 18, 34–38, 179, 214
- Kantian ethical socialism
- Marxist critique of, 224–25, 255, 266, 292, 293, 300–301, 341n.37, 344n.5

- Kantian ethical socialism (*continued*)
 and revisionism, 298–301, 303,
 347n.43
Kant-Studien, 291
 Kautsky, Karl, 224–25, 255, 292, 300,
 301, 302, 303, 304, 346n.32,
 347n.43
 Kavka, Gregory S., 342n.45
 Keck, Timothy, 332n.15, 332n.20,
 334n.32, 341n.37, 345n.15
 Keniston, Kenneth, 334n.30
 Kiernan, Victor, 340n.29
 Kingdom of God on earth, 6, 78,
 243
 Kolakowski, Leszek, 192, 256–57,
 271, 346n.32
 Kolenda, Konstantin, 337n.8
- Labor, 101, 103, 105, 234, 245, 251,
 257, 260, 265–66
 contract, 226, 246, 250
 socialization of, in capitalism,
 259, 284, 285
 value theory of, 246, 249
See also Division of labor
 Lange, Friedrich A., 222, 293–95,
 299, 300, 334n.32
 Lassalle, Ferdinand, 221, 249
 League of Nations, 329n.34
 Legal coercion, 11, 23, 108, 154, 158,
 159, 180, 181, 188, 275, 324n.15.
See also Punishment
 Legal person, 210–13, 214, 215, 222,
 228, 235, 334n.30
 Legislative self, 30, 32, 44, 45, 55,
 123, 126, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212,
 326n.5
 Lenhardt, Christian, 269–70,
 342n.40
 Lenin, 335n.39
 Levels of progress (Kant), 102, 173–
 75, 189–90, 191, 193, 329n.33
 Levine, Andrew, 331n.4, 337n.8
 Lévy, Benny, 96, 97
 Liberalism, vii, 158, 204, 207, 208,
 225, 301, 302, 346n.27
 Lichtheim, George, 347n.43
 Liebknecht, Karl, 300
 Liebknecht, Wilhelm, 303, 334n.34
 Locke, John, 204, 249
 Louis XVI, 177–78, 185
 Lübke, Hermann, 336n.50, 341n.37
- MacBeath, A. Murray, 48–50
 McCarthy, Thomas, 341n.36
 Macpherson, C.B., 332n.19
 Marburg School, 292, 293, 295,
 335n.37, 344n.6
 Marcuse, Herbert, 336n.49
 Market economy (and socialism),
 236–37, 239, 254, 336n.54,
 339n.22, 340n.23
 Marriage, 217, 312n.27, 333n.27
 Marx, Karl
 on Kant, 16, 78, 174, 243
 philosophical self-understanding
 of, 64, 288–89, 343n.48
 solidarity of, 63–64, 282
 view of morality, 56, 64, 255–56,
 258, 260, 262, 264, 265, 270,
 275, 277, 282–83, 288, 289, 296
 Materialist conception of history,
 64, 244, 245–46, 251, 258, 269,
 274, 289, 332n.19, 342n.41,
 346n.36
 Cohen's critique of, 264–65, 266,
 267, 268
 Habermas's critique of, 265–66
 legitimation functions of, 261–63,
 265, 267–72, 288–89
 Vorländer's critique of, 296–97
 May, Larry, 329n.25
 Mediation (between ideal and
 reality), x, 119, 283, 297,
 343nn.48,50
 Mehring, Franz, 292, 301, 302,
 346nn.32,36, 347n.38
 Mendelssohn, Moses, 93–96, 98, 167
 Military, 110, 189
 Mitchell, Allan, 347nn.39,43,44
Mitleid, 61, 75, 87, 315n.13
 Moral commitment, 42, 217–18, 278,
 334n.30
 and autonomy, 51–53
 and dignity, 126, 127, 128, 133
 emotive components of, 43,
 50–64, 88–89, 98
 Moral dissatisfaction (with
 oneself), 46, 54–55
 Moral education, 39, 45, 60–61, 62,
 80, 139, 173, 216, 217–18, 230–31,
 282, 314n.4, 320n.16
 Moral enthusiasm, 50, 57–61, 64, 98,
 126, 168–70, 173, 280, 281–82,
 315n.12

- Moral evil, nature of, 110, 154–55, 177
- Moral faith, 43, 81, 85, 87–90, 117, 131, 309n.8
- Moral feeling, 45–46, 314n.3
- Moral indignation. *See under* Anger
- Morality
 sets infinite task, 11, 78, 103, 127, 190, 254, 300, 303. *See also* Holiness
 three functions of, x, 152, 255–56, 279, 302
- Moral law. *See* Categorical imperative
- Moral politician, 171
- Moral progress, 111–12, 192, 234, 337n.57
 and Cohen (Kantian socialist view), 216, 252–53, 254, 266, 267–68
 grounding of hope for progress, 239, 264–65
 and Kant, 121, 154–55, 189–90, 326n.5
 arguments for belief in, 12, 57–60, 96, 166–75. *See also* French Revolution, as sign of progress
 cultural facilitation of, 11, 40, 105, 139–40, 141, 142
 grounding of hope for progress, 96, 145–46, 152, 165–66, 179, 191, 280
 legal facilitation of, 11, 108–9, 139, 152–53, 155, 158
 morality of, 122–28, 131–32
 obstacles to, 7, 9, 11, 55, 58, 172–73
 three views distinguished, 166–67
 and Marx, 251–53, 254–55, 256, 259, 265, 267, 279–86, 296
 grounding of hope for progress, 279, 280, 289
- Moral satisfaction (contentment), 45, 46, 47, 48, 57, 60, 71, 133, 173, 314n.3
- Moral self-improvement (perfection), 6, 7, 10, 21, 40, 154–55, 173. *See also* Holiness; Moral education
- Moral society, 7, 10, 112, 130, 139, 140, 141, 155, 159, 175, 192, 311n.25
 of colegislators vs. legislators, 37, 38
 and happiness, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77, 129, 132–33
 as “inner” unification of good wills, 157, 160–61, 163, 191–92, 208, 214, 313n.39
 as organism, 26, 27
 See also Highest good; Socialist society
- Moral terrorism, 119–20, 171–72, 253, 271–72, 339n.16
- Moral worth (or actions), 43, 48–50, 80
- Munich Revolution, 122, 125, 282, 304–6, 323n.40
- Murphy, Jeffrie G., 310n.17, 317n.27
- Natorp, Paul, 292, 347n.41
- Natural order
 compatibility with moral order, 67–68, 81–82, 89–90, 243
 as model for moral order, 22–28, 34
- Nestlé Company, 228
- Die neue Zeit*, 292, 344n.3
- Nicholson, Peter, 170, 172, 325n.3
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 302
- Nozick, Robert, 338n.9
- Oakeshott, Michael, 15–16, 322n.35
- Okin, Susan Moller, 312n.27
- Optimism, 97–98, 259, 307
- Paris Commune, 61, 63, 64, 122, 280–82, 285, 343nn.46,48
- Pateman, Carole, 330n.3
- Paternalism, 69, 203, 254
- Paton, H.J., 20, 311n.18
- Patriotism, 210–11
- Peace (international), 164, 192, 194, 303, 306, 329n.34
 and Cohen, 208, 212, 220–21
 and Kant, 12, 109, 114–15, 138–39, 162, 188, 191, 320n.21, 323n.5, 329n.34
 and moral society, 7, 112, 139, 160
 prudential vs. moral, 159–60, 161

- Peace (international) (*continued*)
 roads toward, 8, 110–11, 113, 143, 144
 See also Highest political good
- Perfect state. *See* Republican state
- Pessimism, 97, 98, 99, 193, 267
- Peters, Curtis H., 318n.33
- Peukert, Helmut, 128–30, 132, 323n.48
- Pippin, Robert B., 310n.17
- Plato, 8–10, 120, 217, 309n.4, 333n.27, 334n.28
- Plekhanov, George, 291, 341n.37
- Plurality, 33, 206, 208, 211, 212, 213
- Poggi, Alfredo, 292
- Polish Solidarity, 193
- Political mass strike, 299–300, 346n.26, 347n.43
- Political moralist, 171–72, 271–72
- Popper, K.R., 333n.27
- Possessive individualism, 207, 251, 332n.19
- Praxis group, 241
- Primacy of praxis, 13, 144–45, 190, 233, 241–44, 270, 272, 289, 297, 309n.8
- Primacy of pure practical reason (as methodological doctrine), 67, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 90
- Private ethics, 4, 13–17, 38–40, 111.
 See also under Kant's ethics
- Private property
 and Cohen, 205, 219, 222, 227, 235, 250
 and Kant, 158, 203–5, 331n.10
 and Marx, 250, 252, 259
- Privileged present, 174
- Profit maximization, 224, 227, 228–29, 231–32, 239, 287. *See also* Capital, accumulation of
- Proletariat
 competition among, 277, 279, 283, 284
 revolutionary motivation of, 256, 259, 273–79
 as universal class, 251, 261–62, 279
- Proudhon, P.-J., 249
- Public good, 273–79, 342nn.43,44,45
- Publicity criterion, 23, 24, 184–85, 186–87
- Punishment, 79–80, 81, 161, 183, 187, 201, 202, 253, 318n.33, 325n.19
 abolishment of, 9, 39, 62, 159, 325n.17
 capital punishment, 178, 312n.30, 318n.19
- Quack, H.P.G., 341n.39
- Rappoport, Charles, 292
- Raspail, Vincent, 269, 341n.39
- Rawls, John, 146–51, 324n.8, 331n.5, 333n.23
- Realm of ends, 6, 32–34, 160, 163, 312n.35
- Realm of freedom, 233, 336n.45
- Realm of necessity, 233, 336n.45, 340n.23
- Reason
 evolution of, 73, 101, 106, 153, 173, 326n.5
 hatred of, 107
 limits of, 74, 84, 87, 88, 97, 117
- Religion, 130–31, 150–51
 and Cohen, 205–6, 218, 243, 294, 331n.15, 332n.16, 345n.9
 and Kant, 8, 12, 115, 155–57, 173, 243, 324n.13. *See also* Church; God; Moral faith
 and Marx, 242–43, 244
- Republican state, 8–9, 11, 26, 36, 107–10, 113, 138, 157–58, 165, 188, 192
 as choice of intelligent devils, 143–44, 145, 146–52, 158, 161, 191, 272, 289, 324n.11
 and economic inequality, 146, 162, 198–205
 and moral society, 139, 158, 162, 163, 202
 repressive vs. non-repressive, 9, 159, 161
 See also Highest political good
- Respect
 for the moral law, 30, 43–50, 52, 53, 54, 57, 60
 for persons, 29, 31
- Responsibility, 55, 80, 111–12, 212, 231, 253, 330n.37, 335n.41, 339n.19
 of corporations, 213, 227–28
- Revolution
 and Kant, 114, 138, 168–71, 328n.17
 condemnation of, 175–87,

- 191, 327nn.8,10
See also French Revolution
 and eschatological expectations, 267, 271, 287, 288, 299
 and violence, 262–64, 268–69, 276, 277
 and Kantian socialists, 172, 261, 266–67, 293, 299, 302, 341n.37
See also Munich Revolution
 and Marx, 256, 258, 261–62, 268, 269, 270, 273–79, 344n.52
See also Paris Commune;
 Revolutionary motivation
 moral justification of, 181, 184, 187, 266, 299–300
 Revolutionary motivation
 (Marx), 255, 256, 259, 260, 272–79
 Rights, 113, 146, 151, 158, 192, 218, 220, 299, 320n.14, 324n.7, 326n.4
 and capitalism, 162, 200–201, 202, 203, 205, 248, 262
 right of necessity, 176, 324n.15, 327n.8
 right of political asylum, 221
 right of world citizenship, 115, 161, 221
 right to vote, 36, 198–99, 215–16, 219, 286, 305
 and socialism, 164, 236–37, 238, 248, 254, 256
See also under Freedom
 Riley, Patrick, 142, 309n.7, 324n.12
 Robespierre, 172
Robinson Crusoe, 107
 Roeloffs, L., 333n.22
 Rotenstreich, Nathan, 337n.3
 Rousseau, J.J., 55, 112, 138, 139–40, 321n.30
 Rubenstein, Richard, 330n.37

 Saint-Pierre, Abbot of, 7, 12, 309n.7
 Sandkühler, Hans Jörg, 341n.37
 Sartre, Jean-Paul, 30, 96–97, 99
 Schmidt, Conrad, 291
 Schwarzschild, Steven S., 319n.6, 327n.13, 332nn.16,20, 340n.31
 Schweickart, David, 237–39, 336n.52, 337n.57
 Scientific socialism, 339n.16
 Self-determination (Marx), 245, 247, 249, 250–51, 253, 255, 340n.24
 Sexual morality, 27, 217
 Shell, Susan Meld, 330n.1
 Silber, John R., 79–81, 317nn.25,27
 Simonds, A.P., 329n.33
 Singer, Peter, 323n.3
 Sirianni, Carmen, 335n.39
 Skillen, Anthony, 343n.50
 Smith, Anthony A., 342n.41
 Social action
 Kant's limited view of, 157, 185, 191, 208,
 moral constraints on, 12–13, 38, 55–56, 125, 152, 171–72, 183–84, 256, 300, 307, 330n.16
 Social activity (Marx), five aspects of, 257–58
 Social contract, 180–81, 182, 199, 201, 203, 204, 212
 Social duties
 active vs. passive, 5
 as duties of virtue, 14, 159, 160
 Social ethics, definition of, 4–5
 Socialist International, 306
 Socialist society, Kantian conception of, 164, 205, 208, 222, 223–34, 231–35, 295, 300
 compared with communist society (Marx), 250, 253–55, 288
See also Cooperative; Economic democracy
 Social welfare, 202–3, 220, 246
 Solidarity, 50, 61–64, 98, 132, 133, 173, 185, 282, 283
 international solidarity, 239, 286, 287
Sozialistische Monatshefte, 292, 344n.3
 Speciesism, 323n.3
 Species nature, 245, 247, 251, 255
 Stages of progress (Kant), 187–88
 as stages of social evolution, 188–89, 329n.32
 State of nature
 ethical, 153–54
 juridical, 153–54, 180, 181, 182, 204
 Staudinger, Franz, 292, 293, 333n.22
 Steenson, Gary P., 347n.43
 Stevens, Rex P., 392n.32
 Struve, Peter, 292
 Suffering, 17, 61, 62, 88–89, 90, 129, 130–31, 194, 256
 forgetting of, 132, 133

- Suffering (*continued*)
 sources of, 73–75, 89
- Suicide, 27, 30
- Sympathy, 47, 61–63. *See also*
 Mitleid
- Taylorism, 227, 335n.
- Technology (and science), 61, 74,
 102, 137, 173, 188, 189
 automation, 233, 284
 threat posed by, 194, 230, 330n.37
- Teleology, dogmatic vs. critical
 and history, 94–95, 97–98, 100, 117,
 120–21, 244, 259, 283, 289,
 289, 321n.26
 and nature, 25*
- Theodicy, 87, 117, 118. *See also*
 History, justification of
- Toller, Ernst, 125, 322n.40
- Tönnies, Ferdinand, 212, 224–25
- Totalitarianism, 27, 39, 207–8, 217,
 219, 306, 313n.37, 320n.14,
 333n.27
- Totality, 17, 33–34, 38, 206–7, 208,
 211–12, 214, 215, 217,
- Transcendental method, 209–14, 265
- Truth (Cohen), law of, 229–31, 232,
 243, 297
- Tucker, Robert C., 338n.14, 340n.25
- Typic, 19
- Ultimate end of nature, 134,
 136–37, 142
- Unemployment, 228, 239, 259,
 277, 287
- United Nations, 192
- Unsocial sociability, 73, 102, 104,
 105, 106, 108, 110, 111, 135, 148,
 187, 188, 245
- Utopian (and ethical) socialism,
 Marx's critique of, 56, 260, 261,
 265, 283
- Vanek, Jaroslav, 336n.55
- Vehicles of progress (Kant), 92, 96,
 109, 190
- von Hirsch, Andrew, 325n.19
- von Savigny, Carl Friedrich, 226
- Vorländer, Karl, 223–34, 291, 292,
 294–98, 327n.16, 329n.34,
 345nn.15,16,18, 347n.43
- Vorwärts*, 303, 347n.43
- Walker, Ralph C.S., 88, 89
- War, 7, 58, 109–11, 113, 120, 138–39,
 143, 177, 188, 329n.34. *See also*
 First World War
- Wasserstrom, Richard, 328n.23
- Weisskopf, Walter A., 234, 336n.49
- Wiley, Thomas E., 331n.15, 333n.25,
 334n.32, 341n.37
- Williams, Howard, 329n.29
- Willner, Ari, 123
- Winter, Eggert, 331n.15, 333n.22
- Woltmann, Ludwig, 292
- Wood, Allen W., 51, 53, 87, 338n.10,
 340n.25
- Worker-control socialism, 236–39
- Yovel, Yirmiahu, viii, 51, 81, 153,
 158, 309n.8, 310n.12, 320n.13,
 323n.3, 324n.12, 326n.5, 335n.37
- Yugoslavia, 336n.52

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