

## Chapter IV: The God Problem

Religion is an important and crucial aspect in Kant's thought. It provides a reason for why individuals can commit atrocities such as the holocaust, yet includes a hope for what a true ethical community can be like. Additionally and most importantly, it provides an absolute authority to ground ethics, by establishing why someone would necessarily choose to be ethical. The problem of evil, the ability to overcome this evil, and the question of why one even needs to concern herself with evil are the main focus of Kant's religious philosophy and must be explored in order to explain the actual versus the necessity of the unconditional ought.

Many religions are concerned with the problem of evil, and in this regard Kant is no different. This is a fundamental problem for anyone who postulates the existence of a Creator, especially if She is viewed as a Benevolent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent Force, when applied to the empirical world that is full of suffering and violence. Kant begins his religious philosophy by attempting to explain where this evil comes from and why humanity seems to have such an inherently "evil" nature.<sup>1</sup> Since morality in its ideality has been clearly demonstrated to be free from the empirical world and is solely determined in the realm of freedom by following one's duty, Kant needs to explain how evil can still be so prevalent within human actions. He asserts evil cannot be due to humanity's inclinations or mere biology, i.e., hard-wired survival instincts. Humanity's "animality," or natural inclinations and desires, serves the rightful purpose of "self-love" in the form of survival instincts, "reproduction," and the desire to be social with "other

---

<sup>1</sup> Kant. Religion. 16.

men.”<sup>2</sup> These natural desires and inclinations have no moral worth in themselves. Therefore, they can be considered neither evil nor good.

Another category of “self-love” is the “predisposition to humanity”, or put more simply, it is the desire toward social interaction and social comparisons one has for one’s fellow humans, which is a mixture of the “natural” empirical aspects of a person and “reason.”<sup>3</sup> This predisposition to humanity results from the natural inclination toward building a society, and can be either beneficial or detrimental depending upon where reason leads it. For instance, the United Nations demonstrates the desire for community on the international level, and ideally is meant to protect humanity from either natural or human caused evils. The Nazis used this same desire for community in horrendous ways. Their community was defined as a society of Aryans, which would dominate and control all other ethnic groups. Kant calls the detrimental forces resulting from this predisposition the “diabolical vices” because they transcend the individual and are the vices of the larger society.<sup>4</sup> The Nazis hatred of all other ethnicities demonstrates this point very well. The larger society’s beliefs allowed for individuals to commit horrors, which set a detestable standard for the depth of humanly possible evil.

The last predisposition in humanity is that of “personality” and it is the motivating force that gives one the “capacity” to “respect the moral law.”<sup>5</sup> This predisposition is the desire to be an individual; it is a desire to be one’s own and unique person. Although one has a predisposition toward becoming an individual, it is not a hard-wired response to life. It is by choice one grows into a unique person. The predisposition serves as a

---

<sup>2</sup> Kant. Religion. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Kant. Religion. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Kant. Religion. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Kant. Religion. 23.

potential, but not a guarantee. Kant's philosophy necessitates the ability to freely choose to become a unique person, because of his claims that all can be moral. If one's character or personality was somehow created by one's social surroundings or genetic inheritance, then how could one be held accountable for one's actions. One could simply assert she is not responsible for her actions because of some past abuse. The question arises, what is one before one chooses to become a specific personality? Is one simply a type of non-person, or more likely, is one a reflection of one's social and historical environment? However, these areas of natural human tendencies are not where evil arises from, because they are not truly by choice, except for the last predisposition. They are just tools that one can subvert for maladapted purposes.

Humanity's freedom to choose to follow its self-legislated Duty, is where good comes from and conversely the choice to abandon one's duty is where evil is found. One's freedom lies outside of the bounds of the natural world and solely within the rational realm, or will. The tension created by the competing forces of one's empirical inclinations and ability to make free choices is the realm of morality. This is a very important distinction, because the actual empirical action that is the result of violating one's moral duty is a mere "vice", but the act of willing that action is the "sin", or evil.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted, that this move from bad action to sin, appears to highlight the separation between ethics and morality. If of course, ethics may be viewed without the subject/object distinction, as in the subject of ethics is the individual, whereas the object is the community. However, this fall from 'grace' that humanity continually exhibits in its history, and even as individuals, is not an inescapable determination, but it is the result

---

<sup>6</sup> Kant. Religion. 26.

of our individual choice. One naturally has a predisposition for respecting the moral law and yet continually subverts it by allowing the amoral tools of the natural inclinations to dictate one's actions. For this reason humanity, as a whole, possesses what Kant terms a "radical innate evil."<sup>7</sup> This radical evil encompasses every individual from the seemingly holiest caring person to the apparent lowliest sinner. True holiness is devoid of all infractions against the moral law, as pointed out in Kant's postulate of the highest good. True holiness is absent of any infractions against the moral law, because of the contradiction of a person being both evil and good at the same time. Therefore, humanity is radically evil and needs a type of salvation to overcome each individual's sinful failings, which taint one's ability to ever be truly holy. This evilness of humanity is due to individuals subordinating the moral code to that of one's own natural inclinations, which is a "perversity of the heart."<sup>8</sup> Salvation comes from freely choosing to deny one's inclinations and desires by serving the moral law. However, this necessitates a God who can provide a type of assistance for humanity to overcome the taint of past transgressions against the moral law.

This radical evil does have an origin, but it is not the commonly held view of an original sinner such as Adam and Eve, or an ultimate evil such as Satan. The "origin" of sin in each individual is a continual process of not choosing the moral law over inclinations, and thus is a repeated fall from a "state of innocence."<sup>9</sup> This is an interesting point, because if sin were an inherited fact, or even a total-commitment to evil, there would be no freedom at all. By putting sin as a repeated fall from grace,

---

<sup>7</sup> Kant. Religion. 28.

<sup>8</sup> Kant. Religion. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Kant. Religion. 37.

freedom is made to be a continuous struggle of the will to be “good” and to “hope” for holiness, or to be an ethical person.<sup>10</sup> In fact, with the introduction of radical evil and humanity’s ability to fight against it, Kant begins the long process of re-crafting the traditional interpretations of the Bible in order to have a religious foundation for his claims. A grave danger arises at this point of committing the same error the German Democratic Republic made when attempting to interpret the East German Constitution with foreign legal and human rights presuppositions. Although Kant argues only Christianity lends itself toward a true rational religion, almost every religion may be bent toward some foreign purpose if a religion’s historical social practices are ignored. One’s guiding presuppositions tend to determine the outcome of such a project.

The story of the Garden of Eden becomes a rough analogy of the continual struggle of the will to follow its Duty. Kant even redefines the Christian idea of salvation through “rebirth”, as the process of willing to obey the moral law.<sup>11</sup> Benevolence and grace are transformed into assistance from God, but only when an individual has done everything possible to be moral and thus worthy to receive this help.<sup>12</sup> This is in keeping with the earlier construction of the highest good, where one’s virtue, or obedience to duty, allows for one to be worthy of happiness. But, it should be pointed out that this worthiness is not something that should be unduly praised, because obedience to the moral law is merely conforming to one’s pre-existent duty.<sup>13</sup>

With these foundations laid, the problem of good versus evil arises within the empirical world. The blame for the evil within the world and the lack of attempts to

---

<sup>10</sup> Kant. Religion. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Kant. Religion. 43.

<sup>12</sup> Kant. Religion. 47.

<sup>13</sup> Kant. Religion. 44.

change it are due to humanity being “lazy” and failing to fully commit to the moral law, thereby making it “unworthy” of God’s assistance for anything better.<sup>14</sup> Although the Bible speaks of fighting against demons in this battle of good and evil, Kant interprets this to mean that one is only fighting against the radical evil in oneself.<sup>15</sup>

Kant uses several different Christian metaphors in pursuit of his religion. In fact, most of his ethical claims are Western religious and political ideals in their nature. Religiously, a benevolent and just God is argued for, as well as politically, a strong individualism is argued for within the claim of one overcoming evil by sheer will power. This is not to say this reliance on the West and its Judeo-Christian heritage is necessarily wrong; it could be that these systems are simply right. However, there is a danger here of Kant’s philosophy’s reliance on a type of pure and totally objective reason may be failing to see cultural influences shaping the input and output of his entire project. The mere introduction of the term ‘evil’ carries with it a whole mythology and cultural history of ideals within the West itself. Buddhism does not necessarily have such a term; the Buddhist conception of human suffering is far from the West’s conception of evil. Suffering is caused by attachment to the impermanent and not from an innate radical evil that causes humans to continually disobey the moral law. Additionally, Hindu monism argues for a supreme force that has no anthropomorphic connotations associated with it. This force is merely a disinterested power, which everyone is a part of in a type of universal whole. However, Kant needs an active anthropomorphic force in order to ground his ethics and politics. He claims, Christianity has just been misunderstood and

---

<sup>14</sup> Kant. Religion. 50.

<sup>15</sup> Kant. Religion. 52.

wrongly interpreted for generations, but with a correct interpretation it is the true paradigm of a perfect ethical and political system.

Kant claims that Christianity's phrase of the battle between "heaven" and "hell" verifies his interpretation.<sup>16</sup> The vast separation between these metaphorical forces with earth as the middle ground, demonstrates that humanity is the source of its problems by not reaching for the good, and a soldier's sole purpose is to gain ground. This obligates humanity to be moral in order to achieve the highest good, and a simple conformity to the law by subordinating it to natural inclinations is tantamount to a stalemate or worse.

Christ as the ordinary man, and not the incarnate God, thus becomes Kant's archetype of how one should act. Christ set the example as a human being by demonstrating that true holiness through the total obedience to the moral law can be possible, thus making him the only one worthy of God's approval.<sup>17</sup> But, this Christ-man did not necessarily have to exist for the accuracy of his alleged obedience to duty to serve as a guiding principle for humanity. For Kant, the New Testament stories of miracles and the divine incarnation are bastardizations of the reality of the true religious significance of this archetype. If a man has God's nature, then what could he teach humanity or offer as an example of how to live a morally obedient life? God entails a perfect moral will, which humans lack. The mere perfect following of his duty, as a human, should be enough of an example for others to follow his actions. Likewise, if God is perfect, then so are his actions. This implies that an imperfect populace capable of good, but who often fail to do good, are not able to follow perfectly in his footsteps. The idea that evil is a physical inheritance from one's human ancestry just confuses the problem of sin's

---

<sup>16</sup>Kant. Religion. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Kant. Religion. 55.

origins, since every individual is responsible for her own evil.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the desire for miracles to prove that this special man is something more than the rest of humanity shows a “lack of faith in virtue” on the part of whoever needs this to believe.<sup>19</sup>

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception would interfere with Christ as a man’s impact on humanity, and is part of the problem with wrong interpretations in religion. But if a normal human being is able to achieve perfection, then others can also. However, as every human being has experienced, the task of living up to an archetypal standard is often impossible to achieve, and Kant even states that it is wholly “impossible.”<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, another can never take away one’s lifetime of sins, which continually build up even in the best person. This does not prevent one from attempting to do one’s duty and to act virtuously, but it does raise a problem in the realm of eternal justice. Kant interprets the “crucifying of the flesh” as the process one goes through when one chooses to act as a “Son of God” and obey the moral law.<sup>21</sup> This new man has risen above his inclinations and desires to become an “intelligible being”, which is a new moral being in the eyes of the Supreme Judge, or God.<sup>22</sup> How this transformation is achieved (i.e., switching of one’s soul, etc.) is left unclear and seems to be more a matter of faith for Kant than reason.

The process by which one can then become holy, and how one is transformed is what Kant calls “grace.”<sup>23</sup> This conception of grace is not a gift that assists one in becoming righteous, but it is more akin to a promise than a hope that one’s continual

---

<sup>18</sup> Kant. Religion. 57.

<sup>19</sup> Kant. Religion. 56.

<sup>20</sup> Kant. Religion. 60.

<sup>21</sup> Kant. Religion. 68.

<sup>22</sup> Kant. Religion. 68.

<sup>23</sup> Kant. Religion. 70.

moral activity will make one blameless before God on judgment day. Grace is then merely the God-given justified belief that one can become worthy of eternal happiness by continually struggling to be moral. The moral life would be impossible without this gift from God, because one would continually try and condemn one's self for past transgressions.<sup>24</sup> What is interesting about Kant's version of grace is that it is continually worked for and not just handed out like a gift. Additionally, without such a gift the motivation for being ethical/moral is completely lost, which adds an enormous religious component to his ethics because this grace requires a super-natural agent for its bestowment.

If God's grace is needed to motivate and for one to achieve an ethical life, then there is a necessity for an active God within human affairs in order to insure that the highest good could ever be achieved. The implications of Kant's conception of an active, just God within his political philosophy creates interesting applications for his theory of international relations. God is needed in order to insure perfect international justice can ever come into existence; without God not only can there never be a highest good, but there can never be perfect international justice, thereby resulting in at least some immoral and depraved actions going unpunished. In fact, without the highest good's existence, there cannot even be imperfect international justice, because individual sovereigns will not unite under one common coercive legal and or ethical code. It is unclear as to how God's interference would establish true world justice, whether it would be due to an entire ethical global populace being established, or more likely an ultimate coercive force enforcing the moral law as juridical law. Of course humanity may simply

---

<sup>24</sup> Kant. Religion. 70.

act as if there is a God, regardless of whether He exists or not, and strive toward the highest good. However, this move merely sets the problem of international justice back to its beginning problem, namely how can one justly punish the horrendous, but former legally permissible, actions of another without a legal code grounded upon a universal law.

In order to ground Kant's entire religious, ethical, and political philosophy, the nature of God must be in accordance to his assertions of a type of master clock maker. If God does not exist, His nature is not benevolent and just, or He does not will the highest good to come into existence at this time, then international justice is simply a mistaken idea. The whole point of postulating his version of God was to ground his ethics, which gives rise to his political philosophy. Simply acting as if Kant's God exists is tantamount to acting as if the Nuremberg Tribunals, or any other international court, were and are correct in appealing to a fictional universal law in order to punish its transgressors. If this is the case, Kant's entire system, or any legal proceedings based upon the same reasoning, would be placing matters of justice in the faith that a fiction was in actuality right. Ethics and justice require an amount of certainty in order for actual court decisions to be just and ethical. Actual human lives depend upon the certainty of the authority of the legal systems in place. If one is to be punished and another avenged, the hope in a fiction approximating the truth will never do. Asserting a fiction as fact in order to avoid the difficulties in thoroughly investigating what the truth of the matter is denies the law any true authority. Asserting a fiction as fact seems hardly just or certain enough to decide the fate of any human life.

Since man is the initiator of his 'salvation' through the laws of freedom, guilt and penance do not come into play, which are often so destructive and manipulated by outside forces. However, God is necessitated in order for one to become a perfectly ethical person. In matters of human justice this can have grave results. The Nazis may have simply been acting upon their natural inclinations, because God did not provide them with enough grace. Or, they may have simply believed in a God who was damning them for past transgressions, so the additional immoral actions on their part were of no consequence. Additionally, what if their conception of God's highest good were radically different from Kant's? One could construct a maxim making it a universal law that only those of Aryan descent have the rights to prosper and flourish. The problem is simply that much is dependent upon who actually is accepted as true rational creatures in Kant's view. Women failed to achieve this benchmark for Kant, for the Nazis non-Aryans failed this mark. Can Kant's system truly decide who is right in terms of reason alone? One's culture places values on things through the use of language itself. One's language loads the categorical imperative with conceptions based on historical beliefs and mythologies, which are larger and more complex than the simple words thrown around in everyday language and largely taken for granted.

The paramount problem with Kant's entire project is that he fails to recognize this enormous danger of language's power. What is a human, what is dignity, and what exactly is the good? Is a religion such as Christianity needed in order to demonstrate all these terms? It does, but the base concepts of this religion become unquestioned and hidden presuppositions influencing the whole system. If one changes the religion, the

whole system shifts. The highest good can be turned into innumerable formulations, as well as what it is to be a fully rational human who is able to be a free moral entity.

Kant's system's reliance on a just God inevitably leads to the problem of evil. Even with the grounds for evil's destruction clearly laid out, the question still remains of why an all-powerful God allows evil to continue to exist, or allow evil in the first place. However, this fails to see that evil is the result of human freedom. Evil is simply the lack of good, or more precisely the failure to freely choose to be moral. God could have defeated evil by making humans always choose to be moral, but this quick victory would subvert the "principle of freedom" and would make humanity into slaves. But, because God is a perfect moral being, He would not violate the moral law by using humans as a mere means to achieve His ends of creating a perfectly moral and good world.<sup>25</sup> Evil exists because God is perfectly moral; humans can be evil only because they have the ability to freely choose to be moral. Humanity's misuse of its freedom insures its misfortunes, and religions continually and wrongly placed the blame on outside forces, such as devils and angry gods. Furthermore, these religions set up regulations that use "rewards and punishments" to control the masses, instead of the internal self-legislated moral law.<sup>26</sup> To Kant, Judaism is a prime example of this type of religion, and the Christ-man is its antithesis. As a perfect human archetype, he shows that obedience to one's duty frees one from the slavery of evil. And that even in his murder, he is free and sets the example for "moral perfection."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Kant. Religion. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Kant. Religion. 74.

<sup>27</sup> Kant. Religion. 77.

At this point a brief review needs to be provided. Kant has taken politics as the fulfillment of creating constitutional nations, which insure that one's property rights are not violated. A nation's constitution is based upon a doctrine of right, which insures that one may be able to empirically express one's freedom. One's freedom is only possible by conformity to an ethical law and is expressed within the empirical world through the use of objects, or property. When Kant's political and ethical philosophy is combined, property ownership becomes the means to deny one's inclinations and actively transform the world through the expression of one's moral freedom by making one's actions conform to ethics. This transformation of the world should be creating a society where ethical actions flourish. Ethics is based upon universal laws, which are based on reason alone. However, without a foundational authority to ground ethics, there will exist no true motivation as to why one should be ethical. An unethical life can be a pleasurable experience, and Kant has established that there exists a strong radical evil within each individual. This has necessitated the postulation of an immortal soul and a God to insure there will be a final judgment day for those who refuse to be ethical. God is at the core of Kant's entire project, and his particular conception of God influences the entire building that has been constructed upon this foundation.

One must own property in order to have the necessary control to establish a heaven on earth, or the highest good. However, it seems that a type of might is even at play in becoming a property owner, which is necessary to be a moral person who can then actively transform the world, thereby attempting to create the highest good. This is due to Kant's political assertion that a nation should establish laws making it possible for the industrious to flourish. The power to propel oneself to the heights of property

ownership would appear to be based upon an intellectual might, as well as physical. The danger of a Calvinist view of morality is ever present, because of Kant's intimate connection between ethics, law, and property. It is not an assured danger, but nevertheless the danger is that morality can become equated with economic prosperity. For instance, having a greater amount of property makes one have a greater ability to express one's ethical freedom. This can lead to the belief that one has achieved this by receiving a greater amount of grace from God; one is therefore of a higher moral caliber and should have a greater say within the community. The economic titan can then become the paradigm of the ethical and holy.

The problem lies in the fact that the individual is again seen as the focus of Kant's ethics, instead of the community. "What may I do for myself, not what can I do for my community," is the focus of his thought. The individual's eternal wellbeing supercedes the community's highest good. This may seem like a statement that most religions may agree with, but isn't it the goal of most religions to have actions done out of a heart-felt love for others? The motivation for why one should be moral reduces to a classic fear of eternal punishment for doing otherwise, instead of finding some focus that is specifically and wholly aimed at one's fellow human beings. It is a selfish fear of eternal fire and not a love of one's community that is the true motivator of Kant's ethics. Because of this, ethics is robbed of its humanity, by emulating a particular conception of an unemotional and calculating God who exists as a pure reasoning machine. Although Ludwig Feuerbach seems like an unusual ally to the religious, his insights into the human condition should not be overlooked. He was able to see that much of religion is more about a search for "self-knowledge" about the human condition than it is about

knowledge of the ethereal.<sup>28</sup> Humanity finds itself in a hostile environment and suffering attacks it from all sides, this necessitates the need for ethics and religion in order to provide a sense of security and control. God is infused with a culture's beliefs, and any system based upon a particular conception of God will entail many of a culture's presuppositions and unquestioned beliefs.

It has been clearly established up to this point that Kant believes the problems of this world are solely due to humanity's radical evil and constant subordination of the moral law to our inclinations and desires. It has also been shown that not only is there a model to follow in the form of Christ the man, but also that God will provide grace for all those who show themselves to be worthy by acting in accordance with their duty. Therefore, humanity is "bound" to "strive" for obedience to the moral law in all our actions in order to change the world and establish the Kingdom of God on Earth, or more appropriately named, an "ethical commonwealth."<sup>29</sup>

A mere political commonwealth works toward justice and harmony through the use of external laws, and seldom works. To Kant this worldly and corrupt society is what the Jewish state is, but like Christ is to religion, he wishes to be toward society as a whole and establish a society that is governed from individual internal self-legislated laws. Again, Kant uses the aggregation of individuals in order to arrive at a qualitatively similar whole, but it seems that a nation is qualitatively different from the individual.

---

<sup>28</sup> Feuerbach, Ludwig. *Philosophy of Religion: Toward a Global Perspective*. "God is a Projection," ed. Kessler, Gary, Trans. Eliot, Gregory. New York: Wadsworth, 1999. 487. "Man has given objectivity to himself, but has not recognized the object as his own nature: a later religion takes this forward step; every advance in religion is therefore a deeper self-knowledge. But every particular religion, while it pronounces its predecessors idolatrous, excepts itself---and necessarily so, otherwise it would no longer be religion---from the fate, the common nature of all religions: it imputes only to other religions what is the fault, if fault it be, of religions in general."

<sup>29</sup> Kant. *Religion*. 85-6.

Additionally, in a world of billions of individuals this poses a problem, because each individual has different aims and goals in life. But as God dispenses grace to individuals who obey their duty, He will also provide assistance for a society that pursues a “common end,” the highest good, even though it is “insufficient” as individuals to achieve this.<sup>30</sup> This is a very interesting move for Kant, because whereas he has been speaking solely of individuals and their responsibilities up to this point, he now transfers his ideas to a type of mega-individual, which is society as a whole.

The conglomeration of individuals necessitates laws that look to the “inner” adherence versus the ordinary outer conformity, and God is then reasoned to be the “Highest Law-giver” in order to accomplish this.<sup>31</sup> It is important to point out that God is not said to be a law-giver in the sense of supplying humanity with should’s and should not’s, because these would be external laws, although Kant says this society exists under “divine commands.”<sup>32</sup> What Kant is stressing is merely a hierarchical claim, that God ranks as the ultimate, or perfect, self-legislator and that because of this He has the ability to judge individuals who fail to follow their own self-legislation. God serves as a divine commander solely because His will is in perfect “harmony with all moral duties”, and He is a Supreme Leader of “voluntary” individuals that are in no way coerced into actions.<sup>33</sup> This new and ‘holy’ society can only come to earth when “God” desires it to, but humanity should strive to establish this ethical society as if it “depended” solely on it.<sup>34</sup> This human endeavor to establish this perfect society is where Kant sees the need and

---

<sup>30</sup> Kant. Religion. 89.

<sup>31</sup> Kant. Religion. 90.

<sup>32</sup> Kant. Religion. 91.

<sup>33</sup> Wood. Cambridge. 407.

<sup>34</sup> Kant. Religion. 92.

true purpose for religion. God may be asserted as a non-coercive force, but if the choice is either to live ethically or to be cast into hell, can Kant truly make such an assertion? His system needs a motivating factor, which is God the all-powerful judge. Judgment implies the prospect of punishment for the non-compliance to a command, whether this law is self-legislated or not. God becomes the authority who coercively insures one self-legislates.

The choice of a vengeful God who insures justice is a pure cultural influence, which reason merely refines. Reason cannot construct any systems of thought without being supplied materials; these materials are presuppositions hidden within a culture's shared mythologies and language. The highest good is a construction of a secularized Judeo-Christian culture. A benevolent, just God is necessary in order to motivate an ethical life. Without God, Kant's entire system crumbles and is replaced with might making right, or a purely pragmatic approach to ethics and justice. Universal laws could be used if a nation wished to insure equality, but this is not a necessary option. A Hobbesian approach to ethics, politics, and international law might work just as well. It could probably produce a more peaceful international world due to the lack of universal laws dictating that one must stop the Holocaust or end slavery in one's own country. Ex post facto legislation does not present any problems, as long as the politics of the moment allow for it.

However, this crucial problem within Kant's philosophy is not necessarily the core problem. There could be a God, as Kant describes Him. Or, Kant could simply claim that one should live as if there were a God, the end results would be a world that is striving for peace. God is not the problem here, nor the issue that I wish to pursue.

Neither is the susceptibility of the categorical imperative to allow for outright manipulation in the creation of maxims. The main issue revolves around the conception of what a human is. The problem results from the pure reasoning individual who is able to transcend entirely her environment into the realm of freedom. At every step along this long path, Kant's individual has become divorced from her community; she is disconnected from her very humanity. This is due to Kant's reduction of the human experience to reason and economics. Emotion and social ties have been cast away leaving the individual to be ethical for herself and herself alone. The highest good is the outcome and not the motivation for this commitment to one's duty. For instance, is the Holocaust a matter of extreme unethical and illegal activity solely because it violates reason and property rights? No, it is a matter of extreme human caused evil because millions were viciously and sadistically killed. One's outrage and cries for justice come from compassion that no individual should be subjected to such treatment. Ethics seem to have more to do with justifiable indignation and compassion for one's fellow human being than for reason and economics. The concept of the supreme individual who somehow becomes free of her culture and is able to transcend the empirical into a realm of purely objective reasoning, is the main problem and issue. An individual is the creation of her community; her social historical context, as well as the very language she speaks in, will influence all her reasoning powers. The wood and mortar of reason is culture, a human is likewise of these same materials.

Kant's contribution is showing that if ethics arises from the empirical world, whether from human emotions, history, or biology, they are corruptible and inconsistent. If Kant's project has failed, the hopes for universal laws have also met with defeat. The

international arena will simply have to be satisfied with relative justice, which may be at best consistent for as long as politics will allow it to be. However, Kant's ethical project may still be realizable if one replaces the purely rational, and arguably self-serving moral individual with a more complete and accurate account of what an individual really is. Heidegger's conception of Dasein will now be explored in order to offer a critique of Kant's individualistic project, which may serve to resurrect the idea of a universal law with a few corrections. Reason must be viewed as a tool and humanity must be explored in order to discover what lies beneath its ethical and economic aspects.