PART IV. LIVING WITHOUT VIOLENCE: TOWARD A CULTURE OF PEACE

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Toward Lasting Peace

Kant on Law, Public Reason, and Culture

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ABSTRACT. Kant helps us understand the conditions for peace by reminding us that lasting peace requires both cosmopolitan legal reform and individual moral improvement, including resistance to egoism and the cultivation of cosmopolitan attitudes. The duty to pursue peace includes the duty to promote the rule of domestic and international law and work against its unilateral subversion. The juridical cosmopolitanism of a worldwide league of free peoples enables resistance to the dangers posed by authoritarian regimes and their dangerous willingness to manipulate their subjects and ignore international law. Constraining egoism enables people to overcome the tyranny of their desires and cultivates a sense of affiliation with the larger community of humanity in general, providing the moral foundation needed to support a cosmopolitan legal order. Moral development to a great extent is fostered through the arts and humanities, and a robust cultural life therefore ought to play a central role in the pursuit of global peace.

I

Introduction

Ongoing controversies about issues such as the forcible “spread of democracy,” the use of “enhanced interrogation techniques,” and secret prisons beyond the oversight of any court as tools in the waging

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of the “global war on terror” give renewed urgency to thinking about how to pursue a just and lasting peace. As we try to understand the causes of violent conflict and search for solutions, turning to Immanuel Kant’s thought can help us think through conditions that would lead to a more peaceful world order, as well as help us identify tendencies within our own societies that threaten the prospects of peace. For Kant, peace requires a genuine cosmopolitan legal order, bolstered by the development of cosmopolitan attitudes that transform factionalism and the egoistical pursuit of power into a sense of belonging to a global community of persons—a global reasoning public. As he can help us appreciate, respect for national and international rule of law and the overcoming of parochial visions of identity such that people regard themselves not merely as citizens of particular nations, but first of all as members of humanity and citizens of the world, are indispensable conditions for lasting peace.

Such cosmopolitanism has political and moral dimensions, and there are therefore both juridical and moral conditions that must be met in order to achieve perpetual peace. Kant’s specification of these two sorts of conditions originates in his abiding preoccupation with the dangers of despotism: he maintains that both the despotism of unscrupulous leaders on the national and international levels and the heteronomy of the desires on the individual level contribute to war. In the next section, I elucidate Kant’s understanding of the juridical conditions for peace and justice, pointing out especially the importance of conducting policy in accord with universally agreed-upon norms. In Section III, I argue that he thinks that national and international legal frameworks must be supported by citizens’ moral integrity. Most recent commentary has focused on Kant’s views of the international legal reforms necessary for peace, making it especially important to uncover the conditions for moral reform. Accordingly, in Section IV, I explore the ways in which the cultivation of our aesthetic sensibilities and rational capacities through dialogue, the arts, and the humanities contribute to peace by developing moral character and cosmopolitan sensibility. Kant therefore reminds us of the importance of our commitment to robust liberal education in our attempts to resist despotism and pursue a more just and more peaceful world. In a somewhat phenomenological Afterword, I reflect upon the fact that

the original version of this essay was delivered in Hiroshima, and suggest that the presence of certain symbols can promote cosmopolitan attitudes by bringing into being a sort of community of experience.

II

Juridical Conditions for Peace

KANT CLAIMS that practical reason rejects war "as a test of rights and sets up peace as an immediate duty."¹ The indispensable conditions for perpetual peace are the achievement of the rule of law within nations and in international relations, and the creation of a peaceful federation of free states. Kant initially thought that peace could be secured by means of a single world state. But by the time he wrote "Perpetual Peace," he comes to think that not only would a single world government be unrealizable in practice, but that it too easily could become a despotic imperial monarchy.² Thus he recognizes that the actual existence of such a world state would pose serious risks. As Karl-Otto Apel points out, Kant thinks that a world state or a "despotic superpower" would undermine the commitment to the "autonomy of peoples," as well as threaten to devolve into a "soulless despotism."³ The better solution to the problem of how to resolve conflicts among nations peacefully is for them to enter voluntarily into a peaceful league of nations, a federation of free states. Kant envisions an international order committed to the normative ideal of peace, for such a federation "would differ from a *peace treaty* . . . in that the latter terminates *one* war, whereas the former would seek to end *all* wars for good."⁴ The states allied together in a pacific federation would be subject to a common body of binding and enforceable international law, and the federation would include a mechanism such as an international court of justice at which disputes among states could be resolved by nonviolent means. The linguistic and religious diversity of the nations composing such a federation would ensure an "equilibrium of forces" and "vigorous rivalry" that would prevent a single state from succeeding in becoming a despotic global monarchy.⁵ Kant tells us that humanity must move toward the creation of a "lawful federation under a commonly accepted international right [*Recht*],"⁶ for without such a "cosmopolitan whole . . . there will inevitably be war."⁷

Each of the states allied together in such a federation must be governed as a representative system and founded on a republican civil constitution. Constitutional republics are those states most likely to ensure the autonomy of individual citizens, for republican constitutions are the only ones that can be seen as arising from the universal agreement of citizens or the "idea of an original contract."⁸ According to Kant, a republican constitution is grounded on three core principles: that of all citizens' freedom (that is, the maximum amount of possible freedom for each citizen compatible with the maximum possible freedom of everyone else), the principle that all citizens are subject to the same body of law, and the principle of "legal equality for everyone (as citizens)."⁹ Political freedom here involves my obligation to obey no laws but those to which I can assent rationally; Kant, that is, indicates the importance of citizens' free and conscious assent to the law rather than blind obedience to ruling power. Legal equality is a relationship among citizens

whereby no-one can put anyone else under a legal obligation without submitting simultaneously to a law which requires that he can himself be put under the same kind of obligation by the other person.¹⁰

A republic's law obligates all citizens equally and may not provide exemptions for privileged individuals or groups. Kant distinguishes a republican constitution from a democratic one, as in a pure democracy the majority of citizens may act despotically by coming to decisions about individuals without their consent; republics protect each citizen's rights, and such protection is reinforced by the separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers.

Kant thinks that republican constitutions are best able to avoid war in part because citizens who themselves make decisions about state policy will recognize serious disincentives to waging a war of which they bear the primary costs. By contrast:

when the head of state is . . . the owner of the state . . . war will not force him to make the slightest sacrifice so far as his banquets, hunts, pleasure palaces and court festivals are concerned. He can thus decide on war, as a kind of amusement, and unconcernedly leave it to the diplomatic corps (who are always ready for such purposes) to justify the war for the sake of propriety.¹¹

Kant thinks that the “warlike inclination” of those with power is an “integral feature of human nature.”¹² A constitution requiring citizen consent for military adventures constitutes a powerful check on the militaristic tendencies of despotic power—tendencies imposing serious costs on ordinary citizens. It is important to resist the arrogance of power by ensuring the sovereignty of citizens and holding rulers accountable to their constitutional obligations. What is more, a despotic state’s perpetual orientation toward war frustrates attempts to promote peace because that orientation funnels economic resources toward preparation for future wars rather than to institutions that serve the public good and that have a civilizing function.¹³ More broadly, as Allen Wood notes:

the despotic injustice characterizing states whose economies are oriented toward military power tends to suppress, either openly and forcibly or else more subtly, the civilized and civilizing activities of their citizens.¹⁴

As we are obligated to pursue a lasting peace, so are we obligated to create its necessary conditions. Humanity is duty-bound to resist the dangers of despotism, including that of an imperial “world state,” by creating a cosmopolitan world order, a federation of representative republics committed to the rule of law and the cooperative, peaceful, and lawful resolution of conflicts.

The ideal of perpetual peace stands as a guide that ought to orient our moral reflection and political choices. That ideal generates obligations as well as constraints on our will. To take one example, it follows from the duty to achieve perpetual peace that both punitive wars and wars of extermination are prohibited because each would undermine the conditions making possible a future peace. Kant provides a grim reminder that a war of extermination would ensure peace only in the sense of the tranquility of the cemetery—“on the vast graveyard of the human race.”¹⁵ Since our moral duty is to pursue perpetual peace, we must strive to make constant progress toward that end:

Now, morally practical reason pronounces in us its irresistible *veto*: *There is to be no war*. . . . And even if the complete realization of this objective always remains a pious wish, still we are certainly not deceiving ourselves in adopting the maxim of working incessantly toward it. For this is our

duty, and to admit that the moral law within us is itself deceptive would call forth in us the wish . . . to be rid of all reason.¹⁶

This assertion that peace is a regulative ideal is nothing like a quietistic despair about the possibility of improving the world in practice. Instead, it is a realistic recognition that although people are not perfectly virtuous, and although our moral and political tasks may never be completely finished, we must never abandon our constant efforts to improve the world. For Kant, political quietism is tantamount to the rejection of the authority of reason itself, and succumbing to such irrationality constitutes an assault on our dignity and a degradation of our very humanity.

Kant's observations are relevant not only to eighteenth-century Europe but can be used to help us identify and think through some of the ways in which liberal democracies today fail to live up to their own ideals and promote policies that erode the rule of law and risk sliding in the direction of a pseudo-democratic authoritarianism. Thus, for instance, Kant testifies to the importance of conducting domestic policy in accordance with laws agreed to by all citizens and foreign policy in accordance with universally agreed-upon legal norms. Violations of legal principles, such as the infringement of constitutionally guaranteed civil rights like *habeas corpus* or the ignoring of the internationally agreed upon and legally binding prohibitions of torture contained within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), should be regarded with the deepest suspicion and rejected as instances of despotic assaults on liberty. For Kant, adherence to law and respect for constitutional limits to executive power are necessary for any realistic expectation of peace and to ensure citizens' autonomy. The duty to pursue peace includes the duty to promote the rule of domestic and international law and work against its unilateral subversion. Kant reminds us, too, that vast military expenditures deprive of resources precisely those institutions whose capacities to cultivate citizens' minds and characters could reduce the need for such spending. If nations prioritize geopolitical ambitions and military expenditures over, for instance, the needs of education, they inhibit the process of general enlightenment and undermine their own futures. Thus nations whose economies are "oriented towards military power" risk falling into a vicious circle, in which large sums of money spent

on the military impede the citizens' intellectual growth, thereby rendering them more susceptible to precisely the kinds of manipulation that would make them willing to support unjust or illegal wars. As we shall see in Section IV, Kant thinks that such economic distortions obstruct the kind of humanistic education that can undermine the nationalist and jingoistic ways of thinking that favor governments that seek the forceful imposition of their will on other nations.

III

Moral Obstacles to Peace

KANT HOLDS that there are juridical conditions for the progressive movement toward lasting peace. Equally important as the reform of national and international legal systems and the creation of a "cosmopolitan whole," that progress requires that human beings adjust their ways of thinking. Kant says that we must cultivate moral maturity, for "all good enterprises which are not grafted on to a morally good attitude of mind are nothing but illusion."¹⁷ Just as the rule of law is necessary to support a moral society, a flourishing democracy requires educated and informed citizens prepared for moral responsibility. In other words, republican constitutions require for their efficacy citizens disposed to respect the rule of law and each other, prepared to promote peace and protect citizens' autonomy by holding themselves and their leaders accountable to moral and legal norms, and capable of resisting their leaders' attempts to manipulate them by thinking for themselves. International law requires for its efficacy people and nations who understand themselves as citizens of the global community and who are willing to respect universally agreed-upon standards for governing that community. Perpetual peace is a legal endeavor that must be supported by moral development, and the ultimate responsibility for war and peace lies with individuals.¹⁸

To appreciate the point that the pursuit of perpetual peace is not just a political but also a moral pursuit, one need understand Kant's view of the obstacles to peace. War is "incited by our unbridled passions," and given passions such as "ambition, lust for power, and greed, especially on the part of those in authority—there will inevitably be war."¹⁹ All these drives that, when unchecked and allowed to

motivate conduct, stand in the way of establishing the cosmopolitan order that is the condition for perpetual peace are forms of egoism. Egoism constitutes the most significant obstacle to peace. Kant says:

From the day that man begins to speak in the first person, he brings his beloved self to light whenever he can, and his egoism advances unrestrained . . . Egoism can only be contrasted with pluralism, which is a frame of mind in which the self, instead of being enwrapped in itself as if it were the whole world, understands and behaves itself as a mere citizen of the world.²⁰

Egoism undermines the pluralistic or cosmopolitan ways of thinking that promote peace, and, when combined with power, it all too often leads to oppression and conflict. Kant associates a resolute or principled egoism with moral corruption and evil: self-love, "when taken as the principle of all our maxims, is the very source of evil."²¹ He says:

[s]elf-regard (*solipsismus*) . . . consists either of self-love, which is a predominant benevolence towards oneself (*philautia*) or of self-satisfaction (*arrogantia*) . . . [T]he propensity to make the subjective motives of one's choice into an objective motive of the will in general can be called self-love; when it makes itself legislative and an unconditional practical principle, it can be called self-conceit.²²

The "moral egoist limits all purposes to himself,"²³ consistently adopting as his or her maxim the "law of self-love" over the thought of duty, and moral egoism culminates in self-conceit, where idiosyncratic desires and interests are treated as if they have the status of authoritative law. A person who consistently subordinates the universal maxims of duty to merely subjective purposes arising out of self-interest (even a person who does what duty requires but does so from nonmoral motives) is morally corrupt. Kant says that the "sole ground" of a good character is the "pure moral motive."²⁴ Character requires resolve: our principles must be "firm" and not shift "hither and yon like a swarm of gnats."²⁵ A good character is a disposition that consistently agrees with the moral law; it is a resolute way of thought in which one's principles are ordered properly, self-interest invariably is subordinated to duty, and in moral contexts nonrational desires are prohibited from overriding reason and determining the will. One's desires must be subjected to rational direction, and reason must assume its rightful place as "commanding authority."²⁶ It is worth

highlighting the theme of solipsism in Kant's account of egoism. An egoist, whose motives are grounded in self-interest, thinks and acts as if he or she "were the whole world." Self-regard is "*solipsismus*" because only one's own interests are taken as significant and one isolates oneself by refusing to hear or heed those claims made upon one by others. The self-absorption of egoism undermines a more open and pluralistic cosmopolitan attitude, in which one's thinking and conduct are oriented not by selfish concerns but by a sense of affiliation with the larger community of humanity in general—the kingdom of free rational beings, all of whom are ends in themselves.

If human egoism is the main obstacle obstructing progress toward peace, then the continual approximation to perpetual peace requires moral maturity on the part of individuals. In order to have any hope of realizing its political goals, humanity must resist egoism and resist the evil principle in human nature, learning to subordinate empirical motives arising from self-love to those arising from respect for the moral law. In part, this is why Kant criticizes the familiar pragmatism of the "political moralist," the politician who promotes virtue because it can help achieve political ends. Such moralizing is a cynical abuse of morality. Instead, one's principles should be valid *a priori*, and must not be subordinate to empirical, political goals. He applauds the "moral politician," committed to the pursuit of peace as a moral task deriving from the recognition of *a priori* principles of duty, and says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its *righteousness*, and your object (the blessing of perpetual peace) will be added unto you."²⁷ Thus for Kant, even in the pursuit of the political goal of the elimination of war, our moral development ought to be our primary concern. As G. Felicitas Munzel puts it, when

the maxims of justice and perpetual peace are adopted in a resolute conduct of thought on the part of the world's citizens . . . a permanent basis in human nature will have been developed on the grounds of which one could expect world events actually to proceed toward a perpetual peace.²⁸

Once people develop themselves morally such that egoism is checked and motives of duty become the determining grounds of a resolute will, then the legal frameworks for peace will receive a solid grounding in the moral maturity of citizens, and humanity will

progress toward a lasting peace. For Kant, moral improvement requires fortifying the ability to resist the passions by enhancing our receptivity to pure practical reason and its autonomous moral legislation. Moral reform is developing character such that the subject ties "himself to certain practical principles which he has unalterably prescribed for himself by his own reason," thereby ensuring that self-interest is subordinated reliably to duty, and respect for the law is our incentive.²⁹

IV

Dialogue and Sympathy: The Arts, Humanities, and Morality

KANT REMINDS US of the importance of liberal education and a vibrant cultural life by arguing that the arts and humanities contribute to the moral maturity necessary for peace. In this section I claim that they do so primarily by inhibiting egoism and cultivating a pluralistic and cosmopolitan sensibility. Kant says that "fine art and the sciences" make us "civilized" for society, for "they make great headway against the tyranny of man's propensity to the senses, and so prepare him for a sovereignty in which reason alone is to dominate."³⁰ And he says that the "propaedeutic" for the arts lies in:

cultivating our mental powers by exposing ourselves beforehand to what we call *humaniora*; they are called that presumably because *humanity* [*Humanität*] means both the universal *feeling of sympathy*, and the ability to engage universally in very intimate *communication*. When these two qualities are combined, they constitute the sociability that befits [our] humanity . . .³¹

The arts are civilizing because they can prepare us to resist our subjection to our selfish desires, and preparation for artistic appreciation and creation involves exposure to the humanities, which help to cultivate our humanity by promoting sociability.

Kant suggests that humanity will move toward peace "as culture grows" and peoples achieve "mutual understanding" and "greater agreement over their principles"; progress in "cultural matters" leads to humanity's "progressive improvement in relation to the moral end of its existence."³² It is through culture that humanity progresses toward morality and peace. As Wood observes: "Culture prepares the way for

reason chiefly by increasing our capacity for communication."³³ Kant ties the capacity for communication, along with a universal sympathy, to that sociability that lies at the core of what it is to be distinctively human. He values communication so highly because it is essential for the development of critical reason; this is because the best way to test one's opinions is by trying to harmonize them with those of others. It is through dialogue with others that we come to understand them and their views, but it is also through dialogue that we can best correct our own false opinions and inconsistent principles (or help others correct theirs). Sound, critical rationality does not occur in a solipsistic vacuum:

Reason must in all its undertakings subject itself to criticism; should it limit freedom of criticism by any prohibitions, it must harm itself. . . . [Reason's] verdict is always simply the agreement of free citizens, of whom each one must be permitted to express, without let or hindrance, his objections or even his veto.³⁴

Kant thinks of egoism in solipsistic terms. He distinguishes among three sorts of egoism. The moral egoist only values his or her own individual desires and refuses to acknowledge the overriding authority of the moral law. The aesthetic egoist "isolates himself," seeking the "touchstone of beauty only in himself."³⁵ The logical egoist "considers it unnecessary to test his judgment by the reason of others, as if he had no need of a touchstone (*criterium veritatis externum*)."³⁶ All three forms of egoism involve an undue reliance on the legitimacy of one's idiosyncratic desires or judgments and an isolating of oneself from a larger community. Logical egoism's particular mistake is to think that individual reason is self-sufficient and self-correcting, and it cuts itself off from the larger community of fellow citizens, dialogue with which has the capacity to correct errors and ensure rational consistency. It does not follow, of course, that we should automatically harmonize our own views with the prevailing attitudes. Such conformist siding with convention "lulls the mind to sleep."³⁷ What Kant advocates is a dynamic situation of constant tension, a perpetual, reciprocal testing in free conversation of one's thinking against that of others and of the thinking of others against one's own.

Such communication is precisely what is involved in the humanities. Reflection in humanistic disciplines incorporates as perhaps its central

dimension dialogue—both with other individuals and with *texts*. Our conversation with texts enables us to enlarge, however imperfectly, the community of thinkers with whom we converse to include those remote from us in space and time. We therefore are able to bring to bear views informed by cultural conventions very different from those informing our own ways of thinking, multiplying and enriching the critical perspectives we can invite to engage our own worldviews. Dialogue enables us to subject our own thinking to the most rigorous criticism—and from a panoply of perspectives. Mutual openness to criticism allows us to hope for greater consistency in our thinking as well as that “mutual understanding” and “greater agreement over principles” Kant thinks should drive humanity toward peace.

Another way in which the arts and humanities contribute to the countering of egoism is evident in Kant’s discussion of the three maxims of the understanding in connection with the difference between taste and sound understanding. These three maxims are “to think for oneself” (Kant connects this with an enlightened thought liberated from the despotism of custom); second, “to think from the standpoint of everyone else”; and, finally, “to think always consistently.”³⁸ Whereas our discussion of the corrective function of the social dimension of thinking clarifies what is necessary to meet the requirements of the third maxim, here we are concerned with the second. Thinking from the standpoint of others promotes a “broadened” way of thinking, and one thereby overrides “the private subjective conditions of his judgment, into which so many others are locked . . . and reflects on his own judgment from a universal standpoint.”³⁹ Kant urges us in this maxim to struggle against intellectual solipsism. By coming to appreciate new perspectives, one can adopt a “universal” or objective stance from which to reflect critically on the limits and strengths of one’s own perspective. Indeed, he suggests that one can adopt a universal point of view “only” by appropriating others’ points of view.⁴⁰ The cultivation of the capacity to adopt new perspectives is exactly what is involved in the humanities. Part of reading literature is the exploration of often very alien characters, and relating their motivations and values to one’s own life. Similarly, philosophy involves the attempt to understand the worldviews and arguments of thinkers from remote times and alien cultures. Such

understanding enables one to envision multiple perspectives from which to reflect upon one's own views.

Kant suggests that the sound understanding with its "broadened" way of thinking deserves to be called a *sensus communis logicus*. Our cognitive abilities are not alone, however, in their capacity to transcend the limits of one's own narrow perspective. Taste, Kant asserts, is a *sensus communis aestheticus*. The *sensus communis* is a:

sense *shared* [by all of us], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else's way of representing [something], in order *as it were* to compare our own judgment with human reason in general and thus escape the illusion that arises from the ease of mistaking subjective and private conditions for objective ones . . .⁴¹

When making aesthetic judgments, I expect others to agree with me. This expectation prompts my faculty of judgment to transcend its own perspective by comparing its judgments with those arising from other possible perspectives. Aesthetic appreciation envisions and recognizes perspectives other than our own, and involves the mind's stretching itself, thus helping it overcome its provincialism. Rudolf Makkreel claims that it is through this common sense that aesthetic judgment can possess intersubjective as well as subjective import, and notes that Kant holds that the common sense is the presupposition of the communicability of all knowledge. Makkreel says:

The *sensus communis* uses reflective judgment to abstract from the private empirical aspects of our subjective representations in order to generate what might be called a communal or intersubjective perspective . . . [It is] transcendental . . . in the sense of opening up the reflective horizon of communal meaning in terms of which the truth can be determined.⁴²

Kant thinks that the enlivening of our cognitive powers in aesthetic appreciation facilitates social communication. Taste is civilizing, and the judgment of taste is not "egoistic" but "pluralistic."⁴³ Taste prompts a consciousness of ourselves as part of a larger and diverse social context, orienting us within a shared "horizon of communal meaning." Its cultivation of our communicative capacities at the same time undermines (logical and aesthetic) egoism and fosters that sense of communal belonging and connection needed for a cosmopolitan way of thinking.

Taste contributes to culture in other ways as well. Kant claims, for instance, that aesthetic appreciation involves the consciousness that certain kinds of pleasure possess more than merely hedonistic significance, for the reflective pleasure involved in taste "attunes the spirit to [rational] ideas."⁴⁴ Taste enhances our receptivity to rational—including moral—ideas, and, since the consciousness of the beautiful is pleasurable, it inclines us to seek out more opportunities for such attunement. Thus taste orients us within the social world of art and creative life. The aesthetic consciousness also disposes us toward the disinterested state of mind required by morality. The aesthetic attitude "greatly promotes morality . . . [It is] the disposition to love something . . . even apart from any intention to use it."⁴⁵ Neither our liking for the good nor for the beautiful is determined by an antecedent interest. The disinterestedness of aesthetic reflection contributes to morality by cultivating our responsiveness to the kind of thinking we must engage in when concerned with moral matters, a thinking that is disinterested, as we must not allow personal interests to serve as grounds for the determination of the will. The aesthetic attitude even prepares us to take pleasure in the arduous task of doing our duty disinterestedly, since in reflection upon the beautiful we take pleasure in disinterested contemplation. Taste prepares us to resist egoism by habituating us to the enjoyment of thinking from a point of view other than that concerned with our own gain.

Both the humanities and aesthetic appreciation therefore contribute to culture and to a sound rationality by enhancing our communicative capacities, by helping us transcend our individual perspectives, and by orienting us in larger social contexts. As we saw above, the "sociability" that Kant links to the humanities comprises not only communication but also sympathy. Sympathy is inadequate to serve as a moral motive: When

incentives other than the law itself (such as ambition, self-love in general, yes, even a kindly instinct such as sympathy) are necessary to determine the will to conduct conformable to the law, it is merely accidental that these causes coincide with the law . . . [and] the man, despite all his good deeds, is nevertheless evil.⁴⁶

Yet Kant claims that we have an indirect duty to cultivate sympathy. Wood suggests that sympathy is important because it can serve as a

provisional substitute for morality, helping us guide our conduct in conformity with the moral law “until reason has achieved the necessary strength” to determine the will.⁴⁷ Yet, for Kant, it is not sympathy but *apathy* that is suited to “hold the reins provisionally.”⁴⁸ Sympathy is an emotion, and emotions intoxicate, undermining the objectivity needed for disinterested reflection:

Emotion is surprise through sensation, whereby composure of mind . . . is suspended . . . What the emotion of anger does not accomplish quickly will not be accomplished at all.⁴⁹

Kant distinguishes the abrupt force of emotion from passion, which is deliberative and persists for longer.

Sympathy is important not because it is suited to guide our conduct, substituting for morality, but because it strengthens our bonds to others and facilitates rational autonomy by undermining egoism. Kant characterizes sympathy as a “shared feeling,” a feeling of pleasure or pain at “another’s state of joy or sorrow.”⁵⁰ “Humanity,” he says, can be thought of as “the capacity and the will to share in others’ feelings,” and we are duty bound to be open to such sharing, to promote our sympathetic capacities.⁵¹ One reason we have this duty, as Henry Allison argues, is because sympathy helps us recognize the suffering and need of others, making us better able to “practice the duty of benevolence.”⁵² Yet in addition to helping us find opportunities to act beneficently, sympathy is important because it subverts our tendency to become “enwrapped in [ourselves as if we] were the whole world.” Egoism constitutes the great obstacle to morality. Sympathy, the felt participation in the feelings of others, the felt consciousness of the *other’s* pleasures and pains *as mattering to oneself too*, helps us break through the solipsistic barriers we erect around ourselves. Cultivating sympathy helps prepare for that autonomy in which respect for the moral law is the determining ground of the will by undermining obstacles to that autonomy. Allison says that sympathy fortifies “our ability to act from duty rather than as replacing . . . the duty motive . . . [It helps us] adopt the universalistic perspective required by morality.”⁵³ If it is not mistaken to connect Kant’s notion of “sociability” with his remarks about being “civilized” for society, then we find direct textual confirmation of my claim about the importance of sympathy. Becoming civilized is making “headway against the tyranny

of man's propensity to the senses." If cultivating "sociability" is equivalent to becoming "civilized," then Kant sees sympathy as civilizing because it works against selfishness and disposes us to that autonomy "in which reason alone is to dominate." Sympathy is not sufficient for morality, but it promotes autonomy by weakening the egoism that proves such a hindrance to morality.

Thus the humanities cultivate the capacity to understand others and appreciate their points of view. They undermine provincialism, checking our presumption that our own standpoint is the only one, perhaps thereby preparing us to really hear and even care about those claims made by others who are different from us. What is more, studying history or literature may well make one first aware of difficulties faced by others. Such disciplines alert us to the kinds of suffering others face, for instance, because of their social or political situations. Literary authors in particular portray suffering with a vividness and poignancy one rarely finds in a text such as a newspaper article. Readers tend to care about what happens to even very alien characters in great novels. By bringing their characters alive to us, writers elicit emotional responses and prompt experiences of sympathetic connection. On the other hand, coming to understand the perspectives of those whom we see as alien might help us recognize that those others are not as different from us as we had previously assumed—thus promoting a cosmopolitan sensibility by reinforcing our sense of affiliation with them.

The arts and humanities develop sociability by cultivating our communicative and sympathetic capacities, and such cultivation contributes to moral maturity. Their civilizing effects in this way help us resist the heteronomy or tyranny of the desires, for when we permit our inclinations, which are connected with the causal order of nature, to determine the will, we sacrifice our autonomy and allow ourselves to become subject to natural forces.⁵⁴ Subverting the tyranny of the desires grounding egoistic self-conceit, sympathy fosters a cosmopolitan sense of connection to a larger community. We are now in a position to appreciate better the reasons why Kant holds that the republican civil constitution is best suited for progress toward peace. One reason, as seen above, is that in authoritarian states resources that otherwise could be used to bolster institutions serving to promote

culture and cultivate citizens' minds flow toward military expansion. Furthermore, republican governments are representative. A society in which the citizens themselves are sovereign has an interest in cultivating its citizens' rational capacities. A despotic government depends for its existence on its ability to control the populace, and so has an interest in keeping the majority of its subjects ignorant and manipulable. Representative states ideally would flourish given an enlightened citizenry able to resist attempts to manipulate opinion through propaganda.

Perhaps of greater significance is the idea that representative states are more likely than authoritarian ones to promote (or at least permit) the sorts of *free communication* and aesthetic refinement that help civilize us. Free communication is the condition for all cultural and moral progress because it is a condition for sound reasoning. Kant says that:

the same external constraint which deprives people of the freedom to communicate their thoughts in public also removes their freedom of thought . . . which alone offers us a means of overcoming the evils of [civil life].⁵⁵

Censorship creates enormous obstacles for critical rationality, contributing to a citizenry in danger of losing the freedom of thought, and we must remember the despotic threat posed by attempts in our own society to regulate speech. Free expression is essential to open societies in which each citizen has an interest in being informed and in which the state has an interest in keeping its citizens informed. More representative states might also help promote the conditions necessary to cultivate sympathy. Governments seeking authoritarian control of their citizens censor the arts, in part because of artists' abilities to challenge the status quo. Ideologies require for their righteousness enemies against whom they can oppose themselves. Artists frequently challenge the legitimacy of 'those in power' by uncovering the travails experienced by those disadvantaged by current regimes, and by representing sympathetically groups demonized by those in power.

On Kant's view, the reflection characteristic of the humanities subverts the natural propensity to egoism by orienting us through dialogue in a social world, by helping us recognize that the interests

of others matter, and by cultivating our ability to adopt the standpoints of others. Such reflection strengthens our sympathetic bonds with others, helping us resist the temptation to treat others as instruments. Kant therefore reminds us of the value of humanistic education. The humanities, for example, can help us resist the spirit of nationalist exceptionalism that undergirds imperialist designs and the willingness to ignore international law, by fostering cosmopolitan attitudes and moral resolve. If Kant is right about this, then the current decrease in support for liberal education will be of little help in our pursuit of individual autonomy and peace. Indeed, we see increasing emphasis instead on "preprofessional" education designed to prepare students for careers by teaching skills that will make them competitive in the marketplace. One danger in such models of education is that their pragmatism habituates students to thinking from the narrow perspective of techniques for achieving their own material goals rather than from more universal perspectives oriented by moral commitments, and their instrumentalist emphasis on acquisition and competition encourages egoism instead of reflection about how to cooperate with others regarded as equal members of a community in order to resolve differences peacefully. Education focusing on narrow skill sets also fails to prepare students for the sorts of historically informed and morally committed self-reflection that make possible intellectual autonomy and thoughtful resistance to political manipulation.

Undermining liberal education threatens liberal societies because it constitutes a failure to cultivate those capacities necessary for responsible citizenship. Thus Kant reminds us of the importance of resisting despotic tendencies within our own societies by strengthening our commitments to international law, to truly representative national legal systems enabling citizens to govern themselves, and to institutions such as an independent judiciary able to enforce the rule of law and protect individual rights against despotic power. He also reminds us that we cannot expect peace unless we foster a civil society in which voices cut across sectarian and national lines to envision and promote the interests of the global community of persons, unless we nurture a culture of free expression and debate and the will to resolve differences through peaceful dialogue, and unless we renew our

commitments to liberal education and a vibrant cultural life in a culturally diverse cosmopolitan world order.

V

**Afterword: With Kant in Hiroshima: Toward a Phenomenology
of Cosmopolitan Sensibility**

HIROSHIMA ENDURES as an especially powerful reminder of the devastation war is capable of unleashing, and of the duty to pursue peace with which all humanity is charged. Here I would like to reflect somewhat experimentally upon the way in which the concrete experience of the *place itself* can foster a cosmopolitan sensibility. What I suggest is that certain symbols can undermine boundaries, speaking to people from a multiplicity of cultures and bringing into being a kind of community of experience. This community of experience is founded on a shared remembering and can prompt a joint commitment to the well-being of all. Countering attitudes of solipsistic egoism that thinkers such as Kant recognize as so dangerous, such experience involves the feeling of belonging to humanity as such, of being part of a kind of collective subject.⁵⁶

Kant emphasizes the moral and political importance of a cosmopolitan attitude of affiliation with humanity in general. Regarding oneself as a "mere citizen of the world," rather than an isolated subject whose individual interests are pitted against those of everyone else, is an important condition for subverting the self-conceit leading to injustice and war. As I argued above, Kant's interests in free dialogue and culture in part are motivated by his commitment to the moral development necessary for responsible citizenship. A rich cultural life stands as a check on the anti-moral tendencies of egoism especially by helping us appreciate perspectives other than our own and by strengthening our sympathetic connections with others. What becomes clear in the presence of a place such as Hiroshima's Peace Park is that some symbols and monuments also have the capacity to encourage a more cosmopolitan orientation in the world.

While walking in the Peace Park at the heart of Hiroshima, one sees the Cenotaph, a monument designed both to shelter the souls of those who perished in the 1945 nuclear attack and to express a resolute

commitment to peace. Just behind the Cenotaph, and framed by its arch, blazes an eternal flame, intended to endure until the worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons. The flame of peace burns to embody a continuing commitment to lasting world peace. Overlooking the Park is the skeleton of the "A-Bomb Dome," the shell of the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall. The building stood underneath the nuclear blast, is now registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and is a nearly universally recognized symbol of the devastation following history's first nuclear attack. Surely, there are few people who would not recognize any of these reminders of the suffering brought upon a people by war. Indeed, in the park one is struck by the rich variety of languages spoken by the city's guests; people from all over the globe come to see, and remember.

These monuments provide sensible representations of ideas: ideas of suffering, devastation, and dedication to working for a more peaceful world. And this reminder of the horrors of war is a reminder that the risks we face are shared: nuclear devastation threatens all of humanity. Distinctive to the experience of this threat is the recognition that it looms over not just me, but over all of us. Prompted by these symbols is a feeling that one is threatened along with others, who in this regard are no different from oneself. The boundaries dividing us seem to begin to evaporate, and one feels that one belongs to a sort of collective subject—a "we," rather than an "I." One feels that we are "all in this together," and that everyone jointly is bound by the same duty to avoid future wars.

The Peace Park also fosters an experience of being joined in sympathy with others who are there. Reflecting upon these monuments cannot help but stir one's sense of compassion. And recollection of the suffering endured by the victims of the attack is at least partially communal. People gather together, introducing themselves to others to share their thoughts, and those others begin to seem as if they are no longer strangers. These symbols of suffering and peace touch everyone, and serve as a foundation for conversation with a diversity of people, who then reflect together upon their respective experiences. Presence in Hiroshima prompts what Kant refers to as sociability: dialogue, communication, including the capacity to reflect from many points of view, and sympathy with those who have

suffered in war. Particularly powerful is the feeling that this sympathy is shared with others; one remembers and feels together with others, and everyone's reflection together is oriented by presence in the place itself. The possibility of a pluralistic experience of being part of a community—a cosmopolitan sensibility—is initiated by one's responsiveness to the significance of the place.

While walking in the park at night, the illuminated dome on the bank of the Motoyasu River is hauntingly beautiful. Everywhere people gather to talk, date, celebrate, play music, and sing. Hiroshima stands as a reminder not only of tragedy and war, but also as the concrete embodiment of human resilience, vitality, and hope for the future. Such hope is inspirational, reinvigorating our commitments toward a more humane future. Particularly intriguing in this place is the simultaneous consciousness of these two kinds of significance. On the one hand, the park is a place of joy, friendship, and beauty. On the other, the presence of its monuments involves the constant awareness of past and potential suffering, a background against which friendships are conducted. Taking the evening experience of the Peace Park as a model, perhaps the task with which we are left is to orient our present and future being-with-others by a vigilant recollection of past tragedy. Perhaps relations with others ought to be developed against the background of our consciousness of the horrors of which humanity is capable.

Notes

1. Kant, "Perpetual Peace" (1991: 104). Hereafter abbreviated as "*PP*."
2. *PP*: 105.
3. Apel (2007: 58–59); cf. *PP*: 113.
4. *PP*: 104.
5. *PP*: 114.
6. Kant, "On the Common Saying . . ." (1991: 90). Hereafter abbreviated as "*TP*."
7. Kant, *Critique of Judgment* (1987: 432–433/320). Hereafter abbreviated as "*CJ*," German AK pagination first.
8. *PP*: 99–100.
9. *PP*: 99, Kant's note, italics deleted.
10. *PP*: 99, Kant's note; cf. Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1991: 314/125). Hereafter abbreviated as "*MM*."
11. *PP*: 100; cf. *TP*, 90–91.

12. *TP*: 95.
13. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose" (1991: 51). Hereafter abbreviated as "*IUP*."
14. Wood (1999: 296–297).
15. *PP*: 96.
16. *MM*: 354–355/160–161; cf. Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1996: 331/249). Hereafter abbreviated as "*APV*." G. Felicitas Munzel argues that Kant articulates the idea of perpetual peace first of all as a moral task. As reason obligates us a priori to adopt the maxim of pursuing perpetual peace, "the validity of the idea for our actions is now independent of any particular instantiation . . . [Kant's] emphasis has shifted the meaning of the idea from its historical fulfillment . . . to its conception as a formal principle for our conduct of thought . . . to its immediate connection with our character" (Munzel 1996: 104).
17. *IUP*: 49.
18. I must thank Dr. Edward Demenchonok for helping me see this point.
19. *Cj*: 432–433/320.
20. *APV*: 128–130/10–12.
21. Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1992: 31–32, 41), italics deleted. Hereafter abbreviated as "*R*."
22. Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* (1993: 73/76–74/77). Hereafter abbreviated as "*CprR*." Kant also connects selfishness with solipsism at *MM*: 433/229 and *MM*: 450/245.
23. *APV*: 130/12.
24. *CprR*: 152/158.
25. *APV*: 292/203; cf. Munzel (1996: 118).
26. Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1990: 441/58).
27. *PP*: 121–231 cf. *PP*: 123–124.
28. Munzel (1996: 105), emphasis deleted.
29. *APV*: 292/203.
30. *Cj*: 433/321.
31. *Cj*: 355/231; cf. *Cj*: 297/163.
32. *PP*: 114.
33. Wood (1999: 303); cf. *PP*: 295–296.
34. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1929: A738–9/B766–7).
35. *APV*: 129–130/12.
36. *APV*: 128–129/11.
37. *APV*: 129/12.
38. *Cj*: 294/160; cf. *APV*: 228/128.
39. *Ibid.*: 295/161, emphasis deleted. Wood notes that for Kant reason actively "seeks out what is other in order to bring our own thoughts, feelings, and volitions into harmony with it under common principles having universal validity" (Wood 1999: 405, note 19; cf. *ibid.*: 302).

40. *Ibid.*: 295/161.
41. *Cf.* 293–294/160, translation altered.
42. Makkreel (1990: 158).
43. *Cf.* 278/140.
44. *Cf.* 326/195, my gloss in brackets.
45. *MM*: 443/237; cf. *Cf.* 267/127 and *Cf.* 230–231/78.
46. *R*: 26, emphasis deleted.
47. Wood (199: 270). The Kant quote in Wood's text is taken from *APV*: 253/158.
48. *APV*: 253/158.
49. *APV*: 252/156.
50. *MM*: 456/250, emphasis deleted.
51. *MM*: 456/250, emphasis deleted; cf. *Cf.* 208/50.
52. Allison (1990: 119).
53. Allison (1990: 119–120). At *MM*: 457/251, Kant does hint that sympathy can supplement duty. Arthur Schopenhauer is perhaps the thinker who has thought most insightfully about sympathy. He rejects Kant's grounding of ethics in rational principles, and rejects Kant's linking of dignity to rational autonomy in part because this position reduces animals to the status of instruments. Yet his analysis buttresses Kant's claim that sympathy undermines egoism. Schopenhauer argues that sympathy is a direct interest in the well-being of others, for it is a feeling that one is not finally distinct from the other. Just as Kant characterizes egoism as solipsism, he says that the wicked regard "only their own person as truly real, looking upon others only as phantoms . . ." (1995: 22).
54. *MM*: 216/420.
55. Kant, "What is Orientation in Thinking?" (1991: 247), Kant's emphases deleted. Kant also argues that religious dogmatism and indoctrination hinder freedom of thought.
56. I borrow this last term from Dr. David Carr, who argues that certain historical events open the possibility of experiencing oneself as part of a universal or collective subject.

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