Conclusion: Believing in The Possibility of Salvation.

‘At first everything must be attributed to nature, but later nature itself must be attributed to God.’¹

‘I have learned from the critique of pure reason that philosophy is not a science of representations, concepts and ideas, or science of all the sciences, or anything else of this sort. It is rather a science of the human being, of his representations, thoughts and actions: it should present all the components of the human being both as he is and as he should be – that is, in terms both of his natural functions and of his relations of morality and freedom.’²

The foregoing chapters demonstrate the extent to which theological concerns permeate the fabric of Kant’s work in the critical philosophy and in those works in which he seeks to get to grips with the peculiar problem posed by human beings. The problem is one of human insufficiency, i.e., can human beings, despite the limitations of their own powers of comprehension, be saved from political and social systems that are the product of prudential calculation of interest derived from what they know of themselves and each other from the empirical evidence offered by the study of human behaviour and processed through the faculty of understanding? Kant’s answer to this question is that they can be saved, but only by putting these insights in a new context, i.e., sacrificing them in order to make room for faith. This sacrificial re-contextualisation of the knowledge gained from the understanding and technical practical reason does not result in its erasure, but it is rendered secondary to, and preparatory for, the insights of pure practical reason and rational morality. What a human being can know as a natural entity is merely a developmental phase that prepares the mind for the more fundamental question of how he ought to act. The division between knowledge of human beings and faith in humanity also accounts for Kant’s lower and higher anthropological vantage points: a thoroughly pessimistic anthropology derived from observation of human beings is consistently contrasted against an anthropocy policy rooted in the idea of humanity.

The first part of this conclusion attempts to draw together the threads of Kant’s faith investigated in this book by providing a thematic overview of the political-theological underpinnings of his work. Faith in God, belief that there is a purpose behind nature that is ultimately revealed to be the reorientation of mankind, and the connection between providence and perpetual peace, are examined across Kant’s philosophy, political theory, anthropology and theology. The second section proposes that Kant felt it necessary to assert belief over knowledge as a consequence of his attempt to save metaphysics from the dead end of dogmatism and the scorched earth of scepticism. The making room for faith that Kant advertises as one of his primary aims in the first Critique allows for the restoration of a credible belief in a more than merely animal and mechanical destiny for mankind. In this light, the third Critique’s argument in favour of believing mankind to be the divinely ordained end of nature copper-fastens a cosmology in which the relationship between God and Man is asserted as an article of faith. Kant’s International Relations theory, as presented most systematically in Toward Perpetual Peace, represents how this relationship plays out in the political sphere. The third section of the conclusion assesses the nature of Kant’s reformulated metaphysical and cosmological system. Instead of revelation, Kant recasts religion in terms of a fundamental relationship between the ‘good principle’ and mankind, a relationship that is complicated by the ‘evil principle’ and its presence within the human species, radical evil. The section argues that Kant’s ultimate aim is

¹ Kant, ‘Lectures on Pedagogy,’ p. 480.
² Kant, ‘Conflict of the Faculties,’ p. 288
soteriological, i.e., the salvation of mankind. In contrast to Schmitt’s political theology of the sovereign decision, Kant’s political theology is based on plotting a path to salvation on two fronts – in the postulated afterlife of the first and second critiques, but also in the form of perpetual peace as an *earthy* form of salvation.

**Kant’s Political Theology: Two Primary Themes**

Two main themes emerge that typify Kant’s political theology: the necessity of belief in God as ruler, legislator and judge and the idea that the human being is a fallen creature who must find his way to God and salvation via a reorientation toward the ideal of humanity.

**God’s Governance**

Tracing the incidence of mentions of God across the critical philosophy and areas such as Kant’s moral and political philosophy, anthropology and theology reveals a set of consistent and coherent positions in relation to the importance (and practical necessity) of believing in the divine presence. Kant is quite clear in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that one of the primary tasks of the book is to attempt to achieve ‘a transcendental knowledge of God.’

Transcendental knowledge is restricted to those intelligible concepts beyond nature that are useful in terms of allowing humans to think about existence in systematic terms and thereby invest moral and existential meaning in what would otherwise be an amoral, mechanical order of nature. Although ‘we are cut off from any reasons that could establish the possibility of such an object, and have not the least justification for assuming’ the existence of what Kant calls a ‘mere thought-entity,’ nonetheless, he insists that ‘the existence of appearances, which is never self-grounded but always conditioned, requires us to look around for something different from all appearances, that is, for an intelligible object in which this contingency may terminate.’

Transcendental ideas such as God are ‘indispensably necessary’ not in terms of constitutive, but rather in regulative employment of reason, i.e., ‘that of directing the understanding towards a certain goal upon which the routes marked out by all its rules converge, as upon their point of intersection.’ Transcendently, ‘reason does not determine the objective validity of such a concept, but yields only the idea of something which is the ground of the highest and necessary unity of all empirical reality.’ The fundamental advantage of regulative principles, as long as they are not misused as constitutive principles, is that they open out ‘new paths which are not within the cognisance of the understanding,’ such as the connections between things in the world if God exists as ‘the supreme and all sufficient cause.’ Having established the regulative status of the concept of God, Kant asks an important question: ‘Can we, on such grounds, assume a wise and omnipotent Author of the world? Undoubtedly we may; and we not only may, but must do so.’ In the Canon of Pure Reason, Kant explains why the assumption of God is necessary in practical terms in that the idea of morality as worthiness to be happy cannot be maintained without belief in God:

‘Morality, by itself, constitutes a system. Happiness, however, does not do so, save in so far as it is distributed in exact proportion to morality. But this is possible only in the intelligible world, under a wise Author and Ruler. Such a Ruler, together with life in such a world, which we must regard as a future world, reason finds itself constrained to assume; otherwise it would have to regard the

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4 Kant, CPR, p. 484.
5 Kant, CPR, p. 533.
6 CPR, p. 553.
7 CPR, p. 556, 559-560.
8 CPR, p. 566.
moral laws as empty figments of the brain, since without this postulate the necessary consequence which it itself connects with these laws could not follow. Hence also everyone also regards the moral laws as commands; and this the moral laws could not be if they did not connect a priori suitable consequences with their rules, and thus carry with them promises and threats. But this again they could not do, if they did not reside in a necessary being, as the supreme good, which alone can make such a purposive unity possible.\(^9\)

Thus, ‘without a God and without a world invisible to us now but hoped for, the glorious ideas of morality are indeed objects of approval and admiration, but not springs of purpose and action.’\(^10\) In order to actualise anything of moral worth, the principles of pure practical reason have to be married to powerful incentives that only belief in God can provide.

If the first Critique established belief in God as the Author and Ruler, the second Critique develops further the requirement for belief in God as a moral and political facilitator of mankind’s progress. For Kant the highest good, the correlation of happiness and virtue, is possible, ‘only insofar as a supreme cause of nature having a causality in keeping with the moral disposition is assumed.’\(^11\) Kant ties God inextricably to duty (one of the core concepts of the second Critique) and the highest good, insisting that ‘it is morally necessary to assume the existence of God,’ even if only on a subjective basis, in order to promote the highest good.

While not an objective concept, the postulate that God serves as the basis for hope in the possibility of producing and promoting the highest good (and its attendant political forms), is a ‘need for practical purposes,’ and ‘can be called belief, and indeed a pure rational belief since pure reason alone (in its theoretical as well as its practical use) is the source from which it springs.’\(^12\) Such is the close connection between pure practical reason, the moral law and the idea of God that:

‘the moral law leads through the concept of the highest good, as the object and final end of pure practical reason; to religion, that is, to the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions — that is, chosen and in themselves contingent ordinances of another’s will — but as essential laws of every free will in itself, which must nevertheless be regarded as commands of the supreme being because only from a will that is morally perfect (holy and beneficent) and at the same time all-powerful, and so through harmony with this will, can we hope to attain the highest good, which the moral law makes it our duty to take as the object of our endeavours … Only if religion is added to it does there also enter the hope of some day participating in happiness to the degree that we have been intent upon not being unworthy of it.’\(^13\)

The end of history represented by the redeemed-by-reason species of humanity participating in the highest good, or human beings approximating as closely as possible that ideal, is a major theme within the Critique of the Power of Judgment, in which belief in God is again a necessary feature. Belief in God is a teleological necessity in that Kant argues ‘we must assume a moral cause of the world (an author of the world) in order to set before ourselves a final end, in accordance with the moral law; and insofar as that final end is necessary, to that extent (i.e., in the same degree and for the same reason) it is also necessary to assume the former, namely that there is a God.’\(^14\) The successful resolution of human social and political systems considered from a moral perspective, as for example explored in Toward Perpetual Peace, requires belief in God. This resolution is explored in §83 of the third Critique in which human happiness and culture, the ultimate ends of nature (as revealed within the reflective power of judgement) are discussed. In this section, culture prepares human beings for a final system of interaction: ‘that

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\(^9\) CPR, p. 639.
\(^10\) CPR, p. 640.
\(^11\) Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, (CPrR), p. 240.
\(^12\) CPrR, p. 241.
\(^13\) CPrR, pp. 243-244.
\(^14\) Kant, Critique of the Power of Justice, (CPJ), p. 316.
constitution in the relations of human beings with one another in which the abuse of reciprocally conflicting freedom is opposed by lawful power in a whole, which is called civil society.' In a passage that demonstrates the extent to which the critical and political projects of Kant intersect, he asserts that, ‘a cosmopolitan whole, i.e., a system of all states that are at risk of detrimentally affecting each other, is required.’ Yet even war is given a divine sanction as ‘a deeply hidden but perhaps intentional effort of supreme wisdom if not to establish then at least to prepare the way for the lawfulness together with the freedom of the states and by means of that the unity of a morally grounded system of them, and which, in spite of the most horrible tribulations which it inflicts upon the human race, is nevertheless one more incentive (while the hope for a peaceful state of happiness among nations recedes ever further) for developing to their highest degree all the talents that serve for culture.’ The beneficial aspects of culture, ‘[b]eautiful arts and sciences’ in turn prepare human beings ‘for a sovereignty in which reason alone shall have power.’ It is telling that the last sentence of the third and final critique ends with the propaedeutic advantage of physico-teleological theology and its doctrine of a final end as it is this that ‘makes palpable the need for a theology that can adequately determine the concept of God for the highest practical use of reason.’ Kant’s preoccupation with the role of God in the moral and political spheres in the 1790s suggests that it is by no means an accident, a rhetorical flourish or a concern with the censors, that leads Kant to argue the guarantee of perpetual peace lies in the belief in a divinely ordained resolution of history in the forms explored by Kant in his various works of that decade.

From Human Beings to Humanity: mankind’s Achievement of Worthiness.

Belief in God’s ultimate sovereignty has as a companion concept that the citizenship of his polity is composed of rational beings that ought to conform to the moral law. The only candidate species on Earth is mankind, whose capacity to achieve such citizenship is subjected to sustained scrutiny across Kant’s works. What is clear from following Kant’s engagement with mankind is the use of a two-fold perspective that opposes an anthropology of insufficiency with an anthropodicy (a ‘higher anthropological vantage point’) based on what could be made of human beings through the rationalisation of the species. In antinomian terms the issue may be expressed as the working out of two answers to the question: Is man a merely mechanical entity? Like antinomies present elsewhere in Kant’s work, this one is resolvable in either way: mankind is definable both in terms of the understanding and what it reveals about how human beings appear to be, i.e., in this case they are merely mechanical entities, or in terms of reason and how it expresses the full extent of human capacities, i.e., capable of acting at least in part independently of the natural mechanism as free entities. In the former case, mankind is subject to the mechanism of nature while in the latter, it has freedom sufficient to act as an independent source of causation. Kant’s resolution of the third antinomy is useful here in that he concludes ‘that this antinomy rests on a sheer illusion, and that causality through freedom is at least not incompatible with nature.’ Kant is also careful to demonstrate that for practical purposes, including the achievement of perpetual peace in its fullest sense, that it is the version of mankind associated with the ideal of humanity that ought to predominate, but not in such a way that the human being as a natural entity is denied or ignored. The process of becoming worthy of

15 CPJ, p. 300.
16 CPJ, p. 300.
17 CPJ, p. 301.
18 CPJ, p. 346.
19 Kant makes clear that ‘there is no contradiction in supposing that one and the same will is, in the appearance, that is, in its visible acts, necessarily subject to the law of nature, and so far not free, while yet, as belonging to a thing in itself, it is not subject to that law, and is therefore free,’ CPR, p. 28.
20 CPR, p. 479
happiness and securing citizenship within the divine order is one and the same and is achieved by the same method, namely the reorientation of human self perception and the superseding of technical practical reason (prudence) by pure practical reason (rational morality). This reorientation does not entail the eradication of technical practical reason, but it does alter the relationship between prudence and morality, e.g., the moral politician may use prudential judgment (as long as it is compatible with the moral law and the categorical imperative) in the service of rational-moral objectives.

The sheer difficulty of reforming the moral and social frameworks of an entity that is wedded to a particular way of perceiving itself and the world is the central task of all Kant’s political theory as it is expressed from the first Critique onwards. As investigated in the various dimensions of Kant’s thought explored in this book, the difficulty lies primarily in the limits of empirical knowledge in relation to human beings who may be understood as natural entities within the categories of understanding but who also perceive themselves as being outside nature in important respects. The faculty of understanding is not sufficient to grasp the non-natural dimensions of mankind because it ‘does not permit us to create a new field of objects beyond those which may be presented to it as appearances.’ In the political realm the problem is that human beings construct their societies - domestic and international - according to the faculty of understanding. Ideas that ought to find their final definition in the faculty of (pure practical) reason, e.g., virtue, do not have their proper role in society because the prevailing understanding of virtue is derived from experience with the result that ‘what at best can only serve as an example in an imperfect kind of exposition,’ is instead transformed ‘into a pattern from which to derive knowledge,’ making ‘virtue something which changes according to time and circumstance, an ambiguous monstrosity not admitting the formation of any rule.’ The best the faculty of understanding can do in terms of normative direction is prudential judgment rooted in satisfaction of interests as opposed to genuine virtue derived from pure practical reason. Human beings are deriving their moral instruction from the wrong faculty and misusing what they find because nature ‘in respect of the moral laws … is, alas, the mother of illusion! Nothing 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.’ It is for this reason that an investigation of Kant’s international political theory must begin as this book did with his attempt to ground morality in reason and the related task of seeking to reorient as far as possible what it means to be human away from human beings and toward humanity. The key passage expressing this element of Kant’s political thought is to be found in the first Critique:

‘Man’s natural endowments – not merely his talents and the impulses to enjoy them, but above all else the moral law within him – go so far beyond all the utility and advantage which he may derive from them in this present life, that he learns thereby to prize the mere consciousness of a righteous will as being, apart from all advantageous consequences, apart even from the shadowy reward of posthumous fame, supreme over all other values; and so feels an inner call to fit himself, by his conduct in this world, and by the sacrifice of many of its advantages, for citizenship in a better world upon which he lays hold in idea.’

The motivation of citizenship in the better world governed by God therefore works not merely at the posthumous level, but as an ideal by which to reconfigure not only the self but also society. As the Christian commonwealth in Augustine’s City of God must strive for, but never attain the perfection of the City of God by the implementation of Christian principles, so the Kantian polity or polities must also attempt so far as possible a reformation of their essence according to the principles of pure practical reason. The task may never be completed, but it is a

21 CPR, p. 294.
22 CPR, p. 311.
23 CPR, p. 313.
duty for mankind to attempt the reformation of political life at both the domestic and the international level.

The Pilgrim’s Progress of mankind: From Insufficiency to Obedience

In the contest between the two perspectives on mankind offered by Kant it is clear that he is of the opinion that the practical advantage that accrues from believing that mankind can and ought to strive for the status of a rational-moral being is preferable to the notion that human beings must remain locked within the limits of the mechanism of nature, replicating political systems predicated on prudence and self-interest. Kant then has to address the most fundamental challenge to his theory of moral and political evolution: if the practical benefits of reformation of self and society are so evident, why has it not been recognised and instituted? As seen throughout this book Kant attributes this failure to human moral insufficiency, a tendency to favour technical practical reason over pure practical reason and, ultimately, as a consequence of radical evil being a universal propensity within human beings. 24

Providing a convincing argument in relation to how these obstacles may be overcome constitutes the core of Kant’s theory of international politics and his political theology. This argument consists of four elements. The first element is that the operation of natural forces will force human beings into a social order in which their interests will be accommodated without recourse to war (albeit under the shadow of a war that would destroy all human beings, and with them any concept of right). The second element is that culture, by means of promoting the standards of civilisation (the highest form of social order) will accelerate the pacification effect as states will be ever more anxious not to be seen to violate the emerging norms of a statecraft dedicated to preserving peace as a social good. The third element concerns the organic growth of pure practical reason and rational morality within the cultured social order created by the natural instincts for survival and prestige: pure practical reason, according to Kant, will flourish as human beings seek new principles to guide social life in an environment where prudence can no longer dominate the reason of state in an international environment predicated on a peace of self-interest and a political economy that fosters greed and desire for comfort over the risks of war. The final element of Kant’s theory is his profession of faith in the guarantee of Providence, which provides a framework for the systematisation of human existence. These four elements in concert work to effect the emergence of mankind from its self-incurred minority, shifting self-perception from the parochial concerns of individual human beings and states to the species level of humanity.

Investing belief in the existence of a purposive plan behind nature is a crucial aspect of Kant’s work. Without this assumption the history and future of human existence beyond the mechanical reproduction of society would be meaningless. Belief enables the reorientation of mankind, without it there would be no effective incentive to embrace rational morality. Progress towards an international society composed of a federation of peace loving Republics and the operation of cosmopolitan right, is dependent upon a teleological understanding of humanity as otherwise the progress achieved in one epoch could be reversed in the future. Kant’s ‘prophetic history’ requires a locus outside and beyond history from which history’s course can be assessed in terms of progress towards this ‘rational’ endpoint, e.g., Kant’s celebration of the enthusiasm of non-participants towards the progressive forces of the French Revolution as a sign of the awakening rational consciousness of mankind:

24 Kant does not, and cannot, attribute the failings of human beings to attain proper moral standards of behaviour to innate rational insufficiency as this would preclude the possibility of reform.
Now I claim to be able to predict to the human race— even without prophetic insight— according to the aspects and omens of our day, the attainment of this goal. That is, I predict its progress toward the better, which from now on, turns out to be no longer completely retrogressive. For such a phenomenon in human history will not be forgotten, because it has revealed a tendency and faculty in human nature for improvement such that no politician, affecting wisdom, might have conjured out of the course of things hitherto existing, and one which nature and freedom alone, united in the human race in conformity with inner principles of right, could have promised. But so far as time is concerned, it can promise this only indefinitely and as a contingent occurrence.25

Political Theology at the End of History: Prophecy and Providence

The purposiveness of history ultimately translates into the eventual stabilisation of political forms. The theological dimensions of these forms are clear from Kant’s attempts at formulating them in his critical, moral, political and religious works. The employment of the term corpus mysticum in the first Critique to convey the ‘objective reality’ of the moral world understood as ‘referring to the sensible world, viewed, however, as being an object of pure reason in its practical employment … so far as the free will of each being is, under moral laws, in complete systematic unity with itself and with the freedom of every other,’ is an early example of Kant’s tendency to express his project in explicitly theological terms.26 The closely related idea of the kingdom of ends in the Groundwork is described by Kant as ‘the systematic union of rational beings through common objective laws.’27 Kant removes all doubt as to the theological aspect of his thought by employing ‘the kingdom of God’ as part of the second Critique. Kant’s use of this notion is also telling in the light of his later development of what constitutes an ideal polity in that he claims the ‘doctrine of Christianity, even if it is not regarded as a religious doctrine, gives … a concept of the highest good (of the kingdom of God) which alone [in contrast to Epicureanism and Stoicism] satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason.’ The success of Christian doctrine lies in its powerful conjunction of moral conduct and happiness, an expression of the highest good that culminates in a representation of a ‘world in which rational beings devote themselves with their whole soul to the moral law as a kingdom of God, in which nature and morals come into a harmony, foreign to each of them of itself, through a holy author who makes the derived highest good possible.’28

As seen throughout this book, the idea of a holy author who makes the achievement of a successful resolution of human history possible is a persistent element of Kant’s answer to the question ‘what is man?’ in that belief in a divine plan of existence gives human life meaning and a moral goal that would be irrelevant if mankind was a merely natural species. The linkage between the necessity of faith and the achievement of the correct political form is most obvious in the ninth proposition of the Idea for a Universal History in which the attempt to philosophise (revealingly referred to as ‘prophesying’) the universal history of mankind is tied closely to belief in a plan of nature that in turn is ‘aimed at a perfect civil union of mankind.’ The assumption of a plan of nature allows grounds for ‘greater hopes’ beyond what the analysis of politics as an activity in itself permits: ‘such a plan opens up the comforting prospect of a future in which we are shown from afar how the human race eventually works its way upward.’ The idea of a purposive nature also allows insight into the possible manner in which ‘man’s destiny can be fulfilled here on earth,’ while at the same time providing a ‘justification of nature — or rather perhaps of providence,’ which is important as otherwise nature would be repellent, ‘and, by making us despair of ever finding any completed rational aim behind it, would reduce us to

25 Kant, Conflict of the Faculties, (CoF), p. 304.
26 CPR, pp. 637-638.
27 Kant,Groundwork, p. 83.
28 CPR, p. 243.
hoping for it only in some other world.’ Nature – and therefore politics - can only be redeemed by belief in an order beyond nature itself. The regulative principles which mankind can only access by means of faith in the Author of nature and belief in the purposiveness of nature are the primary means by which political logic and order may be reformed.

A persistent theme of Kant’s work in relation to human progress is the extent to which an experiential, empirical approach to the study of politics is extremely limited. The mechanism of nature may explain aspects of the apparent behaviour of human beings but leads to a final condition characterised by contingency, hopelessness and meaninglessness. Knowledge of human beings leads to a profound pessimism in relation to the political prospects of mankind. While accepting its power, Kant refuses to accept that this is the sole truth regarding human existence: ‘If the course of human affairs seems so senseless to us,’ writes Kant in The Conflict of the Faculties, ‘perhaps it lies in a poor choice of position from which we regard it.’ Recognition of the limits of human beings as they are and as they are knowable through the faculty of understanding and technical practical reason prompts two responses: either to accept the mechanism of nature and its associated political rationality of the pursuit of self-interest, or to look for an alternative vantage point, i.e., the ‘higher anthropology’ Kant invokes in Toward Perpetual Peace, which is essentially a political theological perspective that enables man’s belief in his practical capabilities. This vantage point depends on the belief that God supplements human insufficiency:

‘Thus it is not inappropriate to say of man’s moral hopes and desires that, since he is powerless to fulfil them himself [emphasis added], he may look to providence to create the circumstances in which they can be fulfilled. The end of man as an entire species, i.e., that of fulfilling his ultimate appointed purpose by freely exercising his own powers, will be brought by providence [emphasis added] to a successful issue, even although the ends of men as individuals run in diametrically opposite direction.’

It is this assumption that permits Kant to add meaning to human existence and to posit end points (moral, political, religious) to that existence. Divining what the will of providence may be becomes Kant’s most important task as a political theologian at the stage of his career when he was most involved in questions relating to international politics. Kant, embracing the objectively groundless, but subjectively necessary beliefs that he saw as the only basis for hope that the human species might be saved, adopted the mantle of prophet for a God whose existence was uncertain, but whose presumed plan was essential for considering human existence beyond nature, prudence and conflict on one hand and degenerate peace on the other.

29 Kant, ‘Idea for a Universal History,’ (IUH), Reiss, pp. 51-53.
30 Kant, CoF, p. 300.
31 Kant, ‘On the Common Saying,’ p. 91. The divine supplement is also invoked in Toward Perpetual Peace, p. 109. Kant’s most developed passage on this point is found in the first essay of Conflict of the Faculties: ‘If the human being’s own deeds are not sufficient to justify him before his conscience (as it judges him strictly), reason is entitled to adopt on faith a supernatural supplement to fill what is lacking in justification (though not to specify in what this consists). That reason has this title is self-evident. For the human being must be able to become what his vocation requires him to be (adequate to the holy law); and if he cannot do this naturally by his own powers, he may hope to achieve it by God’s cooperation from without (whatever form this may take). – We can add, further, that faith in this supplement for his deficiency is sanctifying, for only by it can man cease to doubt that he can reach his final aim (to become pleasing to God) and so lay hold of the courage and firmness of attitude he needs to lead a life pleasing to God (the sole condition of his hope for eternal life). – But we need not be able to understand and state exactly what the means of this replenishment is (for the final analysis this is transcendent and, despite all that God Himself might tell us about it, inconceivable to us); even to lay claim to this knowledge would, in fact, be presumptuous.’ Pp. 268-269.
Kant distinguishes his “prophecy” from those of others by means of contrast with Old Testament prophets, contemporary politicians and ecclesiastics. All three in effect brought about that which they warn against by focusing on what are anthropological shortcomings of human beings rather than concentrating on what mankind ought to be. As a consequence, human beings invariably lived down to their expectations. Kant’s alternative ‘prophetic history of Humanity,’ based on the idea of ‘history a priori,’ was based instead on the idea that prophecy should be based on how mankind ought to live, i.e., according to the maxims of rational morality and was written on the basis that this prophecy could serve as the basis for belief in what human beings could become, i.e., a species reoriented around the idea of humanity.

Justifying Belief: The Importance of Kant’s Restoration of Metaphysics

The importance of belief throughout this book requires a thorough account of how and why it became so central to Kant’s many philosophical tasks. In many respects, ‘What may I believe?’ is the fifth great (and in this case, unasked and therefore implicit) question of Kantian philosophy after ‘what can I know? What ought I do? What may I hope? and What is Man?’ Such is its importance that it relates directly to each of the preceding questions, i.e., belief is where mankind turns after knowledge has exhausted itself, belief is intrinsically tied to how we ought to act and for what we may hope, and arguably what differentiates man from other animals is his capacity to believe in both God and his own future life.

In order to get to grips with the role of belief, one must examine how it emerged as a consequence of Kant’s efforts in the first critique to deal with the fallout from the effect of the decline of dogmatism and the rise of scepticism in philosophy. Kant’s political theology is a product of his wider attempt to restore metaphysics after the crisis precipitated by Hume’s sceptical revolution. Invoking the tragic fate of Hecuba, Kant claims in the first Critique that ‘the Queen of all the sciences’ had, in the wake of the sack of metaphysics undertaken by Hume, been overthrown, arguing that ‘the changed fashion of the time brings her only scorn; a matron outcast and forsaken.’ This fall had two causes, the atrophy and degeneration of metaphysics under the administration of the dogmatists, and the final razing of the foundations of the temple of metaphysics by the sceptics, ‘a species of nomads, despising all settled modes of life.’ The error of dogmatism lies in its falling victim to the transcendental illusion of mistaking ‘appearances, which after all are mere representations … for things in themselves.’ The illegitimate extension of concepts and principles of the understanding beyond the limits of nature by the dogmatists led to a series of misleading and ultimately groundless claims about the capacity of the human mind to know the bases of existence in this life and the next, especially in relation to the three core themes of metaphysics, i.e., the role of God, freedom and the nature of the afterlife. Kant’s verdict on the dogmatist metaphysics of Leibniz and Wolff is damning: ‘there is so much deceptive in it that it is necessary to suspend this procedure.’

Despite Kant crediting Hume with interrupting his ‘dogmatic slumbers,’ Kant comes to a no less negative conclusion regarding scepticism as a basis for metaphysics: ‘a way of thinking in which reason moves against itself with such violence that it never could have arisen except in complete despair as regards satisfaction of reason’s most important aims.’

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32 CoF, p. 297-298.
33 CPR, pp. 7-8.
34 CPR, p. 8
35 Kant, Prolegomena, p. 51.
36 Kant, ‘Metaphysik L2,’ p. 306.
37 Prolegomena, p. 25.
The playing out of the antinomies of pure reason, in which diametrically opposed claims are made in relation to whether or not something is or is not the case, allowed the sceptics 'the opportunity thereby to declare all truths of reason as uncertain, and accepted the principle that we lack certainty in all our cognitions,' a situation which led to the overthrow of dogmatism, but also one in which ‘skepticism affirmed no principles <principia> from which one could proceed,’ a scenario in which the ‘interest of human beings suffered’ as a consequence of the failure of both dogmatic and sceptical metaphysics to offer a basis upon which to think about the most elemental foundations of human existence and conduct.\textsuperscript{38}

Caught between ‘obsolete, worm-eaten dogmatism’ and the ‘cancer’ of idealism on the one hand and the violence and rot of scepticism of the other, Kant was determined not to surrender metaphysics to these diseased, warring factions.\textsuperscript{39} Metaphysics, according to Kant is an ‘indispensable discipline,’ which by delineating the uses of reason, ‘treats of the very possibility of some sciences, and of the use of all.’ Metaphysics also prevents errors in the use of concepts and thereby contributes to the harmony of the scientific community and points it to what Kant argues ought to be its true end, ‘the happiness of all mankind.’\textsuperscript{40} Kant’s restoration of metaphysics is particularly important in relation to the idea of God as the guarantor of the moral law and perpetual peace. The dogmatist makes the false claim to knowledge of God’s existence, while the sceptic makes the equally unfounded claim that because God’s existence cannot be known, no moral philosophy can be based on a theological foundation. By pointing out the groundlessness of both claims to knowledge, and by demonstrating the impossibility of ever knowing whether God exists or not, Kant paves the way for a legitimate reconfiguration of the idea of God as an ideal of pure reason. In the absence of the argument for belief in God, scepticism destroys morality as the only logical outcome of the fourth antinomy would be to ignore (whatever its merits) the moral law, as despite the highest good being in effect worthiness to be happy, the human being is faced with a stark choice, to be a fool and obey the moral law despite knowing that no happiness will accrue to himself, or to be a knave:

> ‘If we assume moral principles without presupposing God and another world, then we trap ourselves in a practical dilemma. Namely, if there is no God and no other world, then I must either constantly follow the rules of virtue, [and] then I am a virtuous dreamer, because I expect no consequences which are worthy of my conduct — or I will throw away and despise the law of virtue, tread over all morality because it can bring me no happiness, I will give way to my vices, enjoy these enjoyment of life while I have them, and then I form a principle through which I become a knave. We must then decide to be either fools or knaves.’\textsuperscript{41}

If the sceptic is correct then it ‘appears to be better that one make no effort at all to live adequately to this law, but rather attempt to promote one’s happiness in the world as much as possible. In this manner the cleverest rogue is the happiest … he who endeavored to live according to the moral law would be a proper fool if he set aside the advantages in the world and hankered after such things as the moral law promises him, but cannot deliver.’\textsuperscript{42}

The stakes could not be higher for Kant: either he restores metaphysics or the promise offered by moral life would be fatally compromised. The primary task therefore of the first critique and the \textit{Prolegomena} was to extricate metaphysics from the crisis posed by the redundancy of rationalism and the excesses of the ‘destructive philosophy’ of Hume. The key distinction

\textsuperscript{38} Kant, ‘\textit{Metaphysik Vigilantius},’ p. 429.
\textsuperscript{39} Kant, CPRWP, p. 7; ‘\textit{Metaphysik Dohna},’ p. 362. In a nautical metaphor Kant writes that Hume ‘deposit[ed] his ship on the beach of scepticism for safekeeping, where it could then lie and rot.’ Prol. P. 12
\textsuperscript{40} CPR, p. 665.
\textsuperscript{41} ‘\textit{Metaphysik Mrongrovius},’ p. 133.
\textsuperscript{42} ‘\textit{Metaphysik L1},’ p. 97.
between dogmatic and sceptical approaches and that of the critical philosophy that Kant proposes is that whereas the former both ‘claim to such insight into their object as is required to assert or to deny something in regard to it,’ the latter, ‘confines itself to pointing out that in the making of the assertion something has been presupposed that is void and merely fictitious; and it thus overthrows the theory by removing its alleged foundation without claiming to establish anything that bears directly upon the constitution of the object.’ The fourth antinomy is particularly important in this regard because Kant argues it is impossible to resolve whether or not there is a God as there are perfectly logical and rational arguments in favour of both positions. In this condition of unknowing, the issue devolves to perspective and belief because as Kant claims a ‘strange situation is disclosed in this antinomy,’ namely that the arguments both for and against God’s existence are ‘entirely in conformity even with ordinary human reason, which frequently falls into conflict with itself through considering its object from two different points of view.’ In such a case, according to Kant, both inferences, i.e., God’s existence or non-existence, ‘were correct, according to the point of view which each chose.’ In this condition of indeterminacy, other criteria must be applied when choosing between one option and the other.

In the choice between the theses (‘the dogmatism of pure reason’) and the antitheses (‘pure empiricism’) of the antinomies, Kant argues that the practical interest and the speculative interest of reason and humanity are both best served by the theses. In the practical sphere this involves believing that ‘the world has a beginning, that my thinking self is of simple and therefore indestructible nature, that it is free in its voluntary actions and raised above the compulsion of nature, and finally that all order in the things constituting the world is due to a primordial being, from which everything derives its unity and purposive connection.’ As if to stress the point, Kant argues that viewing appearances solely or primarily from the perspective of pure empiricism destroys the foundations of morality and religion: ‘If there is no primordial being distinct from the world, if the world is without beginning and therefore without an Author, if our will is not free, if the soul is divisible and perishable like matter, moral ideas and principles lose all validity, and share in the fate of the transcendental ideas which served as their theoretical support.’ In the speculative realm, reason also has an interest in choosing the thesis as ‘when the transcendental ideas are postulated and employed in the manner prescribed by the thesis, the entire chain of conditions and the derivation of the conditioned can be grasped completely a priori. For we then start from the unconditioned,’ i.e., God. The antithesis cannot perform a similar function as ‘it can give no answer which does not lead to the endless renewal of the same enquiry,’ i.e., there is an infinite regress as ‘every given beginning compels us to advance to one still higher; every part leads to a still smaller part; every event is preceded by another event as its cause; and the conditions of existence in general rest always again upon other conditions, without ever obtaining unconditioned footing and support in any self-subsistent thing, viewed as primordial being.’ As a third advantage of the theses over the antitheses, they have the benefit of being comprehensible and comforting to the common understanding, whereas in ‘the restless ascent from the conditioned to the condition, always with one foot in the air, there can be no satisfaction.’ Belief in God enables the vital hope in the human future that is necessary for the preservation of morality and at the same time political reform that in turn embodies both rational and moral principles.

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41 CPR, p. 357.
42 CPR, 419.
43 CPR, 420.
44 CPR, p. 424.
45 CPR, p. 425.
46 CPR, pp. 424-425.
47 CPR, p. 425.
Establishing the validity of belief on the grounds of practical interest allowed Kant to shift the ground of the debate with scepticism. Whereas before the sceptic was in a position to deny the possibility of knowing the existence of God and therefore the essential validity of any morality that relied on a divine foundation, Kant now argued that in the absence of definitive proof either way, it was indisputably the case that it was in the practical interest of mankind to believe that God existed. The status of this belief gives rise to merely regulative principles of reason, but as Kant claims this is sufficient as ‘[i]t cannot hurt the good cause, if the dogmatic language of the overweening sophist be toned down to the more moderate and humble requirements of a belief adequate to quieten our doubts, though not to command unconditional submission.’

Similarly, in relation to belief in the continuation of life after death, Kant recognises that ‘of all this we have not the least knowledge,’ but that the hypothesis is useful ‘to meet the attack’ of the sceptic who claims there is no afterlife and that there is nothing beyond what the senses reveal and the mind constructs of reality. Kant admits therefore that the claim to the possibility of an afterlife is ‘not even an idea of reason, but is a concept devised merely for the purposes of self-defence.’ This self-defence consists of pointing out that the sceptic ‘falsely represents the absence of empirical conditions as itself amounting to proof of the total impossibility of our belief, and is therefore proceeding on the assumption that he has exhausted all the possibilities,’ which is a mistake, according to Kant, because ‘[w]hat we are doing is merely to show that it is just as little possible for him to comprehend the whole field of possible things through mere laws of experience as it is for us to reach, outside experience, any conclusions justifiable for our reason.’

Such a hypothesis may be nothing more than a ‘problematic judgment,’ but it cannot be refuted, even if it cannot be proved. Kant’s description of the significance of these judgments is important in that it encapsulates their double-sidedness: ‘They are nothing but private opinions. Nevertheless, we cannot properly dispense with them as weapons against the misgivings that are apt to occur; they are necessary to secure our inner tranquillity. We must preserve to them this character, carefully guarding against the assumption of their independent authority or absolute validity, since otherwise they would drown in fictions and delusions.’ These weapons, used properly and with due care, create the possibility of belief and thereby at least to Kant’s satisfaction displace if not ‘dispose thoroughly of the Humean doubt.’

The other alleged fearful consequence of Humean scepticism, the implication that the natural sphere is also ultimately a meaningless series of events governed by blind chance and necessity is also neutralised by the shift from dogmatic knowledge of rationalism to the critical philosophy. The advantage of believing in God is that such a belief allows ‘the entire chain of conditions and the derivation of the conditioned can be grasped completely a priori. For we then start from the unconditioned. This is not done by the antithesis [pure empiricism/scepticism], which for this reason is at a very serious disadvantage.’ This move allows Kant to maintain that the universe is best conceived of as ordered as long as we remember that ‘we ought not to derive the order and systemic unity of the world from a supreme intelligence, but to obtain from the idea of a supremely wise cause the rule according to which reason in connecting empirical causes and effects in the world may be employed to best advantage, and in such a manner as to secure satisfaction of its own demands.’ The belief is relative, not absolute, it merely allows the development of rules for comprehending an order we have the right to assume, but not to know absolutely: Kant is adamant that this ‘distinction has to be reckoned with in the case of a merely

50 CPR, p. 521.
51 CPR, pp. 620.
52 CPR, p. 620.
53 Prolegomena, p. 62.
54 CPR, p. 425.
55 CPR, p. 551.
regulative principle. We recognise the necessity of the principle, but have no knowledge of the source of its necessity; and in assuming that it has a supreme ground, we do solely in order to think its universality more determinately.\textsuperscript{56} The belief in a ‘regulative principle and maxim’ of order and systemic unity futhers and strengthens ‘the empirical employment of reason … opening out new paths which are not within the cognisance of the understanding.’\textsuperscript{57} This position has important implications for politics, which is a product of nature, and as Kant insists in the Idea for a Universal History, must be understood as being determined and subject to rules of nature in exactly the same manner as other natural processes and systems. Without a ground for belief in the purposive unity of nature, there could be no hope for the development of political systems beyond their existing forms. Natural teleology, which posits the ultimate perfection of these forms over time, depends upon the idea that there is an unconditioned origin and a systematic purpose for existence. Toward Perpetual Peace is notable within the corpus of Kantian texts because the belief in the convergence of both moral and natural purposive unity, both of which have their foundational assumptions in the belief of a divine impetus, is a central tenet of the essay. In this sense it is the fulfilment of ideas and concepts that were mooted in the Critique of Pure Reason.

The final importance of belief to Kant’s project lies in the extent to which it enables the critical philosophy and related political and social projects to occupy the important middle ground between rationalist dogmatism and scepticism. In the first Critique Kant describes belief as ‘the guidance which an idea gives me, and to its subjective influence in that furthering of the activities of my reason which confirms me in the idea, and which yet does so without my being in a position to give a speculative account of it.’\textsuperscript{58} The development of belief as an alternative to dogmatism and scepticism allowed Kant to develop the critical philosophy as a middle way between what he saw as two extremes. A ‘critique of reason’ wrote Kant in the Prolegomena, ‘indicates the true middle way between the dogmatism that Hume fought and the scepticism he wanted to introduce instead – a middle way that, unlike other middle ways, which we are advised to determine for ourselves as it were mechanically (something from one side, and something from the other), and by which no one is taught any better, is one, rather, that can be determined precisely, according to principles.’\textsuperscript{59} The advantage is that within the critical philosophy, the proper, limited use of scepticism allows the deflation of the puffed up claims of dogmatism without lapsing into the destructive tendency of removing all foundations of the articles of faith necessary for practical reason. The ultimate achievement of the critical philosophy is in fact conservative, according to Kant, as once dogmatic assertions are replaced by critical assumptions, the foundations of faith are restored on different grounds:

‘The proofs which are serviceable for the world at large all preserve their entire value undiminished, and indeed, upon the surrender of these dogmatic pretensions, gain in clearness and in natural force. For reason is then located in its own peculiar sphere, namely, the order of ends, which is also at the same time an order of nature; and since it is in itself not only a theoretical but also a practical faculty, and as such is not bound down to natural conditions, it is justified in extending the order of ends, and therewith our own existence, beyond the limits of experience and of life.’

One of the chief achievements of the critical philosophy then for Kant is that it restored the possibility of a post-sceptical belief in God, mankind and the prospect of salvation.

\textsuperscript{56} CPR, pp. 553-554.  
\textsuperscript{57} CPR, p. 556.  
\textsuperscript{58} Definition of belief: CPR, p. 650.  
\textsuperscript{59} Prolegomena, p. 111.
Rational Religion and the Salvation of mankind: Perpetual Peace as Soteriological Exercise

Kant transfigures both God and mankind in the process of rescuing them from what he takes to be the worst implications of scepticism, i.e., that human beings will remain animals trapped within the confines of their passionate natures in a godless universe deprived of meaning. Kant’s anthropodicy necessitates making the case for the ‘higher anthropological vantage point’ of Toward Perpetual Peace or the ‘organized being’ of The Critique of the Power of Judgment. Such representations are only possible, however, in the context of a rational theology predicated on an unknowable entity who nonetheless must be believed to be the omnipotent and omniscient Author of Nature and the Moral Law – the Ens Necessarium – in order to provide a ground for the hope that these reformed versions of mankind may be realised (or at least approximated) in phenomenal existence. Understanding God’s role in Kant’s representation of the natural (and hence political) and rational (and hence moral) universes is difficult, but can be reduced to one principle, i.e., that God may be conceived as believable in whatever form or function reason requires. Kant’s God is defined not by its personality but by its power to act as a foundation for practical philosophy and rational religion. Kant strips back the dogmatic assertions and cultural accretions of the ecclesiastical religions to a set of core rational assumptions: we ought to have faith that God is the source of all things and that mankind may be believed to be the fulfilment of both purposive nature and pure practical reason. The fact that human beings as they appear to each other are clearly not the fulfilment of reason and by their actions clearly align themselves against what can be known through reason of the will of God in creating them in the first place, brings forth an important corollary, i.e., the presence of an evil principle that opposes good within human nature and prevents mankind from moving towards the resolution Kant has identified as the consummation of its a priori history.

The nature and effect of the Evil Principle

In contrast to the relatively clear origins of the good principle, which Kant argues we ought to believe lie in the idea of God as the author of the moral law, the origins of evil are obscure. Whereas reason leads inexorably back to belief in God as a source of rational morality, one cannot repeat the process in relation to evil. ‘The rational origin’ of the propensity to evil, writes Kant in Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason, ‘remains inexplicable … there is no conceivable ground … from which moral evil could first have come in us.’ The scriptural account of the Fall, which attributes the introduction of evil into the human species to ‘a spirit of an originally more sublime destiny,’ merely demonstrates the incomprehensibility of the origin of evil, which Kant makes clear by asking if the source of evil is attributable to that spirit, from ‘whence the evil in that spirit?’ Kant further admits in his preface to The Conflict of the Faculties, that there is a ‘theoretical deficiency which our pure rational belief admits’ in relation to the origin of evil. Because of this deficiency, reason can turn to revelation to fill the gap left by reason, as revelation, like belief, ‘helps – more or less, depending on the times and the person concerned – to satisfy a rational need.’ The biblical and other revelatory accounts of evil, therefore, have merit in that they can fill in the gaps of human knowledge of evil and allow further cognition of its role. In Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason, Kant demonstrates the extent to which he is determined to link his project with Christianity in that ‘any attempt … to find a meaning in scriptures in harmony with the most holy teachings of reason must be held not

60 Kant, Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason, (Rwbrm), p. 88.
61 Rwmbr, p. 89.
62 Conflict of the Faculties, p. 242.
only as permissible but as duty,’ although reason takes precedence, it is nonetheless a requirement to link reason to biblical themes and narratives.\footnote{Rwmbr, p. 122.}

If the origins of evil are obscure there can be no denying the extent to which it pervades Kant’s analysis of the social fabric and political systems of mankind. Kant explores this evil and the possibility of human salvation by means of a dualism between nature and necessity on one hand and reason and freedom on the other. In what is a specifically Kantian account of the presence of evil within mankind, Kant argues that:

‘the human being has many instincts belonging to animality, and since he has to have them if he is to continue being human, the strength of his instincts will beguile him and he will abandon himself to them, and thus arises evil, or rather, when the human being begins to use his reason, he falls into foolishness. A special germ toward evil cannot be thought, but rather the first development of our reason toward the good is the origin of evil. And that remainder of uncultivatedness in the progress of culture is again evil.’\footnote{Kant, ‘Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion,’ p. 411.}

Evil therefore emerges as a consequence of the subordination of reason to natural ends, with reason being forced to act as a handmaiden for instinct, providing answers to the question: ‘how can I get what I consider necessary or desirable?’ not ‘how ought I live in a manner that would be recognised as worthwhile by the deity of rational morality?’ The linkage between evil and nature is established by Kant in relation to the ‘natural propensity’ to radical or ‘genuine evil, i.e., moral evil.’\footnote{Rwmbr, p. 77, pp. 79-80. Although it must also be remembered that ‘[c]onsidered in themselves natural inclinations are good, i.e., not reprehensible, and to want to extirpate them would not only be futile but harmful and blameworthy as well; we must rather only curb them, so that they will not wear each other out but will instead be harmonized into a whole called happiness. Now the reason that accomplishes this is called prudence.’ P. 102.}

Caught between the demands of the moral law and the natural predisposition to self-love, the human being is evil ‘only because he reverses the moral order of his incentives in incorporating them into his maxims.’\footnote{Rwmbr, p. 83.}

The skewed priorities of the human being result in mankind being collectively unable to exercise ‘the moral ability to judge what to think of a human being, and renders any imputability entirely uncertain,’ a moral blindness that according to Kant, ‘constitutes the foul stain of our species.’\footnote{Rwmbr, p. 85.} The moral blindness of human beings is attributable to the materiality, animality, sensuousness and radical evil rooted in material nature – the substance that limits human perception of the self and the external world of nature.

Within the natural world, mankind faces the ultimate problem of political life under its auspices, i.e., nature ‘deals despotsically with man. Men destroy one another like wolves. Plants and animals overgrow and stifle one another. Nature does not observe the care and provision which they require. Wars destroy what long artifice has established and cared for.’\footnote{Kant, Opus Postumum, (OP) p. 221.} If mankind is to achieve perpetual peace, it must first either declare independence from Nature or accept that ‘the human being is a part of nature, and belongs to the sensible world, thus he is therefore also subject to the laws of appearances. All appearances are determined among themselves by certain laws, and just this determination of everything given in nature by universal laws which constitute the mechanism of nature. The human being, therefore, as a part of nature is subject to this natural mechanism’ and as a result mankind must submit to the ebb and flow of natural necessity, making as much sense of its existence as it can with insights derived from the senses and understanding.
Kant opens the pathway to the declaration of independence from nature by means of a Gnostic distinction between God as the *architechtus* or creator of the universe and the demiurge as ‘author of matter.’ On the demiurge (OP): ‘If one goes by experience, and wishes to judge from it the character of the author, it appears that he has taken no account of happiness, but acts as a *despot*.’ P. 175.

This difference between two types of Godhead explains the two-fold fate of mankind as being ‘destined for two entirely different worlds: for the realm of sense and understanding and so for this terrestrial world, but also for another world, which we do not know – a moral realm,’ with the demiurge predominant in the former and the genuine author of the world in the latter. The human being ‘is a part of nature, and belongs to the sensible world’ and as such is subject to the ‘mechanism of nature.’ Salvation from the mechanism or trap of nature is however possible in that ‘the human race is a class of creatures which through their own nature are someday to be released and set free from their instincts … the whole is some day to win through to a glorious outcome.’

The path to salvation lies in the reconfiguration of nature itself by means of a dualistic perspective in which nature can be understood as both ‘the principle that impels us to promote our happiness’ in the achievement of goals established by instinct or prudence, and at the same time, but from a supersensible vantage point, nature can be understood in a practical sense as ‘our ability to achieve certain ends by our own powers in general … a stimulus to good produced in us by God, the predisposition to which we did not establish in ourselves, and so, as grace.’

Grace is defined by Kant as ‘the hope that good will develop in us,’ and he explicitly links the development of grace within humanity to the example of Jesus, to the extent that ‘grace can and should become more powerful than sin in us (as free beings), if only we let it act in us or let our disposition to the kind of conduct shown in that holy example become active.’

If grace is to secure this transformation of the human disposition it must embrace faith as the means to escape nature as the operation of instinct. Faith, understood as the preponderance of the moral constitution over all other aspects of the human being, is instrumental in overcoming nature because it allows confidence that ‘if we were or would ever become all that we should be and (in continued approximation) can be, nature would have to obey our wishes, which, however, would in this case never be unwise.’

The escape from nature understood as sensibility (the domain of the demiurge) is dependent upon belief in the ‘three articles of moral faith, *God, freedom of the human will, and a moral world,*’ described by Kant as the means by ‘which it is permissible for us to transport ourselves in thought beyond all possible experience and out of the sensible world; only here may we assume and believe something from a practical point of view for which we otherwise have no adequate speculative grounds.’

Kant’s ‘pure religious faith’ (as distinct from existing, adulterated ecclesiastical faiths) presents two prerequisites for salvation: firstly, that mankind believe that grace requires moral reform and a commitment to good conduct (according to Kant theoretically ‘we cannot make the removal of sin comprehensible in any other way’); secondly, that from a practical perspective the use of our free will should be determined not by physical circumstances but by reference to the moral principle that we should act in such a manner as to be worthy of God’s assistance: ‘surely we cannot hope to partake in the appropriation of a
foreign satisfying merit, and thus in salvation, except by qualifying for it through our zeal in the compliance with every human duty. 78

Salvation in Toward Perpetual Peace

The themes of evil and salvation that permeate Kant's work find a specifically international expression in Toward Perpetual Peace. In the second definitive article, Kant explicitly refers to the 'wickedness of human nature that shows openly in the free relationship of peoples,' and employing language redolent of Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason, he further claims that man has yet to master 'the evil principle in him (which he cannot disavow). 79 The international environment is the area of political life most clearly affected by the pervasive effects of radical evil as the 'wickedness that is inveterate in human nature … strikes the eye quite unconcealed and incontrovertible in the external relations of states to each other.' 80 The very basis of the problematic relationship between moral doctrine and politics (at the subjective level of individual behaviour on a universal basis, as opposed to their ultimate compatibility in objective terms) is attributable, according to Kant, to the influence of the evil principle in human beings, to the extent that virtue's courage should be expended not so much in 'opposing, with firm resolve, the ills and privations that must be undergone here, as in facing and defeating the guile of the far more dangerous evil principle in ourselves, which lying and treacherous, but still rationalizing, puts up the weakness of human nature as justification of every transgression.' 81

The machinations and general influence of the evil principle within mankind complicate international politics, the operation of which Kant persistently describes as either a 'status' or 'mechanism' of nature. Viewing international relations as a natural mechanism allows the articulation of a certain political logic predicated on power, survival and untrammeled freedom. The Kantian state of nature is akin to its Hobbesian equivalent in that it is 'a status of war, that is, though not always an outbreak of hostilities, yet a permanent threat with them,' by contrast, the state of peace is an artificial condition that must be 'instituted.' 82 The state of nature is one defined by the absence of security and the injury done by the mere presence of others near one's own state. The state of nature is characterised by its lawlessness, and right is limited to those in possession of power sufficient to enforce their prerogatives. The lawlessness of the state of nature translates into a condition of fear in which states either enter into legal contracts with each other or attempt to compel each other by means of force. 83 The lawlessness of the natural condition, in which states prefer the 'frenzied freedom' of individual sovereignty to the 'reasonable' freedom of legal coordination, is regarded by 'us,' according to Kant, as 'a bestial degradation of humanity … a depraved status,' 84 which ought to be exited as soon as possible. 85 The despotic character of nature is revealed by its use of war to drive mankind to every part of the earth. Nature is callous and does not act with care towards human beings, with war seemingly 'grafted upon human nature' in order to achieve nature's end of populating the earth. 85 Agreeing with the ancient Greek saying that 'war is bad in that it produces more evil people than it destroys,' Kant highlights that the immiseration of human beings is the consequence of following nature's imperatives, '[s]o much, then, for what nature does to

78 RWBMR, p. 148.
80 TEPWS, p. 115.
81 TEPWS, p. 123.
82 TEPWS, p. 59.
83 TEPWS, P. 59.
84 TEPWS, p. 75.
85 TEPWS, p. 96-97.
further her own end with respect to the human race as an animal species (emphasis added). In so far as it can be discerned from experience, nature has no end for humans as animals (human beings' sole identity in natural terms) other than extending their presence as far as possible over the earth by any means necessary, but most especially the morally unacceptable practice of war.

Nature plays out its conflictual logic on many levels in global political life. The natural desire of every powerful state, according to Kant, is to become a universal monarch ('to place itself in this manner in a permanent status of peace, ruling, if possible, the whole world'), which calls forth the countervailing forces of states anxious to preserve their sovereignty. Nature further 'wills' division by means of segregating people according to linguistic and religious differences, 'which carries with it the propensity to mutual hatred and a pretext for war.' The mechanism of nature, without the eventual germination of reason in the articulation of freedom and the development of morality, is a cruel despot that offers little to its subjects other than the prudential 'art of using that mechanism to govern men' without reference to right, which in this scenario, 'is a thought void of anything real."

The natural condition in which immoral human beings exist is that from which mankind requires salvation. Kant attributes an important role to nature itself in the process by which mankind might evolve beyond the mechanism of nature. In what is the most crucial political-theological passage of Toward Perpetual Peace, Kant argues that the process of global pacification is guaranteed by 'nothing less than the great artist nature ... from the mechanical course of which purposiveness conspicuously shines forth in letting concord arise by dint of discord among men even against their will.' The key move that Kant makes is to introduce a perspectival distinction between the purposiveness of nature perceived as simple fate and that purposiveness regarded as a product of providence to the effect that, depending on which perspective one employs, one derives very different kinds of peace from nature's purposiveness. In simply natural terms the pacification effect that Kant identifies under the banner of 'late' (defined by Kant as 'the necessitation of a cause unknown by its laws of operation') is attributable to the operation of rational self-interest as revealed by prudence / technical practical reason, i.e., the peace of fear of death or loss of earnings. In providential terms, however, this purposiveness may be read as the product of 'the deep-seated wisdom of a higher cause directed toward the objective ultimate end of mankind.' In effect, Kant is replaying the fourth antimony of the Critique of Pure Reason in that perpetual peace is thought simultaneously as both a purely empirical but also transcendental (and theological) issue. Thus although it is the great artist nature that guarantees perpetual peace, this attribution may be only at the initial, surface level of events and processes, and ultimately the great artist nature revealed to be best conceived as in turn attributable to God/providence.

At first sight it would appear that Kant is in favour of a natural as opposed to theological understanding of perpetual peace, endorsing the use of the word nature over providence as it is 'more becoming to the confines of a human reason which, in respect of effects to their causes, must keep within the bounds of possible experience, and also more modest than the expression of a providence that we can cognize, whereby one presumptuously puts on Icarian wings to get

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86 Kant, Toward Perpetual Peace (TPPReiss), p. 112.
87 TEPWS, P. 101.
88 TEPWS, PP. 101-102.
89 TEPWS, P.110.
90 TEPWS, P. 88.
91 TEPWS, P. 88.
closer to the mystery of its unfathomable intention. The Icarian caveat, however, comes prefaced with its own caveat, i.e., this 'proper' use of nature instead of providence only applies 'when as here, we have to do with theory only (not religion). Theory, for Kant, applies to the empirical world of appearances, hence the reference to 'relations of effects to their causes' - it is defined by its limits in the phenomenal realm, limits that Kant makes abundantly clear in the context of the ultimate incapacity to deliver true perpetual peace, which can only be delivered by the employment of pure practical reason. The criticism of providence offered by Kant is also tied to the metaphysical position staked out in the first Critique, as it is not providence, but the invocation of 'a providence that we can cognize,' i.e., the ontological claim that god guarantees perpetual peace, that Kant rejects as Icarian. Belief and religion are very much to the forefront of Kant's project, and it is telling that it is ultimately providence not nature, that Kant claims is vindicated by his work.

The limits of nature in providing perpetual peace are linked to the shortcomings of technical practical reason and prudence as means by which to constrain or direct human inclinations and passions. Thus although nature can come 'to the aid of the reverend, but practically powerless general will grounded in reason' to the extent that a nation of devils can form a republic, by the combination of self-seeking inclinations allied with technical practical reason organising the state to direct its inhabitants forces 'against each other in such a way that one curbs the others in their deleterious effect or neutralises them: so that the result turns out for reason as if both did not exist at all, and man is thus forced to be, though not a morally good man, yet a good citizen,' this combination is not sufficient to resolve the problems of interstate and cosmopolitan politics.

This inability of human beings as natural agents to achieve peace is attributable to the fact that prudence, the technical practical reason of force and cunning, 'still stands under fate, that is, reason is not elucidated enough to survey the series of predetermining causes that permit predicting the fortunate or ill result of man's commissions and omissions with certainty according to the mechanism of nature.' In contrast to this contingency and uncertainty, pure practical reason offers more definite guidance, 'in order to remain in the groove of duty (according to rules of wisdom), to that, and thus to the ultimate end, reason casts its light brightly enough ahead.' Moralising politicians, justifying illegal but prudentially informed acts 'under the pretext of a human nature not capable of the good according to the idea as prescribed by reason, make impossible, as much as depends on them, a change for the better and perpetuate the violation of right [emphasis added]. Politicians such as these can only operate according to the lower anthropological level of the knowledge of men as natural entities, and not at the higher level, i.e., that of 'knowing man and what can be made of him (emphasis added). Ultimately, the most important outcome of 'all these serpentine windings of an immoral doctrine of prudence to bring about the status of peace among men out of the warlike status of nature' is the extent to which right is the proper guide to achieve that end, to the extent that politicians 'don't dare to base politics publicly on manipulations of prudence only.' Viewing perpetual peace as a merely technical task to be achieved instrumentally by prudence is tinged with the uncertainty that bedevils all technical practical reason in human affairs, because 'much knowledge of nature is required in order to use her mechanism for the end in mind, and yet all this knowledge is

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92 TEPWS, P. 88. 
93 TEPWS, P. 88. 
94 TEPWS, P. 107. 
95 TEPWS, P. 112. 
96 TEPWS, PP. 112-113. 
97 TEPWS, P. 116.
uncertain in regard to its result, concerning the eternal peace, whichever of the three
departments of public law [state law, the law of nations, and cosmopolitan law] one may take.\textsuperscript{99} By way of demonstration of this unpredictability, Kant argues that '[i]t is uncertain whether in
the interior, a people may be kept in obedience and at the same time in prime more successfully
by severity or by baits to vanity,' regardless of the form of state involved. The only exception is
that of a true republic, which as it 'can only enter a moral politician's mind' is a product of pure
practical reason and hence outside the realm of prudence.\textsuperscript{99} An international law based solely in
statutes derived from political calculation of 'ministerial plans' is also unreliable in that such law
'in fact is only a word without a real thing and rests on treaties that in the very act of their
conclusion contain the secret reservation of their violation at the same time.'\textsuperscript{100}

Insofar as nature plays a genuinely positive role in furthering perpetual peace it lies in two
dimensions, i.e., the breathing space for the development of legal relations offered by the
equilibrium produced by states in conflict and in the commercial activities of states and their
citizens at the cosmopolitan level, a passion for money-making that Kant argues is incompatible
with war and instrumental in preserving peace as states will prevent war between conflicting
parties as war is bad for business and therefore contrary to the interests of the whole. These
two positive roles, however, have negative counterparts, e.g., the balance of power may not be
sufficient to restrain every attempt at hegemony with the result that a universal monarchy of
'soulless despotism' could emerge crushing right and, in its eventual demise, creating the
conditions for anarchy, the worst of all social scenarios, to emerge. At another level, as the
sixth definitive article makes clear, war and conflict could potentially lead to a situation in
which the combatants resort to 'dishonourable stratagems' to win a conflict, thereby destroying
trust and the possibility to conclude peace, leading to a war of extermination and the perpetual
peace of the graveyard for all mankind. In terms of commercial activity, Kant stresses that the
credit system 'the ingenious invention of a trading people' is a 'dangerous power of money, a
treasure, namely for waging war that exceeds the treasures of all other states combined' a
danger that is further compounded by the inevitable default of the debtor state resulting in the
involvement of many innocent states in the ensuing financial damage.\textsuperscript{101} Although Kant wants
both dishonourable stratagems and the use of credit outlawed under the preliminary articles he
is surely acute enough to recognise that they are products of processes inherent in the
operations of nature's mechanism as outlined in the later parts of the essay, Kant was also not
blind to the fact that the horrors of colonialism were the result of the inhospitable practices of
'civilized, chiefly trading states.'\textsuperscript{102} Three problems then pose serious difficulties in relation to a
purely natural peace that emerges organically from the operation of the politics of self-interest:
unpredictability, the problem of regression, which leads at best to Abderite cycles of progress
and degeneration, and finally, the problem of nature's means, which are inherently cruel,
callous and reduce mankind to an animal status without any possibility of viewing itself as
anything other than subject to Nature and its inscrutable intentions (assuming it has any). The
only positive consequence of moral evil according to Kant is that it 'has the quality –
inseparable from its nature – of being adverse to itself and self-destructive in its intentions
(specially in relation to others of like mind) and thus makes room, though in slow strides, for
the (moral) principle of the good.'\textsuperscript{103}

\textsuperscript{99} TEPWS, P. 119.
\textsuperscript{99} TEPWS, P. 119. The republic of devils then is not a ‘true’ republic as it is not the product of good will and
rational morality.
\textsuperscript{100} TEPWS, P. 119.
\textsuperscript{101} TEPWS, PP. 49-50.
\textsuperscript{102} TEPWS, P. 84.
\textsuperscript{103} TEPWS, p. 122.
Providence and Perpetual Peace.

The mechanical operation of nature in its morally indifferent manner and human beings in their actively immoral choices provide the valuable service of allowing the ideas that undergird true and certain perpetual peace - right and law – the eventual opportunity to circulate and gain traction in those communities that develop republican states and federal international societies; this is the only sense in which nature can be said to guarantee perpetual peace, i.e., as the midwife of reason. Kant, in any case is quite clear that the guarantee is a practical idea, not a theoretical concept: ‘through the mechanism of human inclinations themselves, nature guarantees the eternal peace, with a security, it must be admitted, that is not sufficient to (theoretically) presage its future but does suffice in practical respect and makes it a duty to work toward this (not merely chimerical) end.’

The reform of politics according to pure practical reason begins with the idea of a republican state. In addition to the war aversion derived from technical practical reason within a representative legislature, what separates a republic from other states is ‘the impeccability of its origin in having sprung from the pure source of the concept of right’. The Republican pillars of freedom, legislation and equality within the state issue from the idea of the original contract on which all juridical legislation of a people must be founded. It is important to note that Kant argues the ‘validity of these innate and inalienable rights, which necessarily belong to humanity,’ is put in the context of man’s ‘legal relations even to higher beings (if he thinks such),’ i.e., that man ought to conceive of himself ‘also as a citizen of a super-sensible world,’ in other words as a citizen of a transcendental order. The validity of these rights, which have no necessary traction within the mechanism of nature, can only be properly secured by the embrace of the other perspective permitted to account for the purposiveness of nature, the providential analysis of the same impulse to harmonisation of the international derived from pure practical reason: a broader, deeper and more complete idea of perpetual peace that has the further advantage of being predictable - if pursued according to its principles – even to the final, objective end of humanity.

Kant refers to providence as ‘the deep-seated wisdom of a higher cause … predetermining the course of the world,’ before making it clear in the vein of the third critique that the ideas associated with providence, i.e., ‘purposiveness in the course of the world,’ the objective ultimate end of mankind, and the predetermination of history are all elements that we ‘can and must only add in our thought to form a concept of their possibility for us as after analogy with human technical actions.’ Thinking of providence in this manner has the advantage of recasting human destiny from being merely a part of the mechanism of nature (with an uncertain end) to participating in ‘the end immediately prescribed by reason,’ i.e., the independence of mankind from nature’s imperfect organisation and lack of care for the individuals and peoples that

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104 TEPWS, P. 100: ‘nature irresistibly wills that right finally gain the upperhand. What one here neglects to do will at last generate itself, though with much discomfort.’
105 TEPWS, p. 103.
106 TEPWS, P. 67.
107 TEPWS, P. 62.
108 TEPWS, p. 64.
109 Objective end of humanity: ‘This ultimate end of pure practical reason is the highest good so far as it is possible in the world, which however is to be sought not only in what nature can procure, namely happiness (the greatest sum of pleasure), but at the same time in what is the highest requirement, the condition, namely under which alone reason can adjudge happiness to rational beings in the world: their morally most lawful behaviour’ (‘What is the Real Advance Made by Metaphysics since the times of Leibniz and Wolff?’ XX, 294). Quoted in WS, p. 89n.
compose the species. Employing the analogy of God as an artist, (a major theme of the third critique), Kant admits that this idea ‘in theoretical respect, is transcendent indeed,’ but argues that the idea of a divine artist is ‘in practical respect however (for example, of eternal peace as a concept of duty to use the mechanism of nature to that end) dogmatic and well grounded as to its reality.’ Belief in a providential arrangement of the world allows the human mind to think about how perpetual peace might be secured according to a divine will based on reason – it is therefore a vital step in the process of moving beyond nature.

Whereas in the purely natural understanding of the processes that lead to perpetual peace the human being is essentially reduced to a passive object of nature’s will, the providential perspective allows a practically necessary reorientation of both the mechanism of nature and mankind’s place within it. The key move in this direction is Kant’s assertion that we can only make comprehensible that which lies underneath the at best partial impression created by our understanding of nature ‘by underlaying it with the end of a world-originator who predetermines it, calling his predetermination (divine) providence.’ Consistent with the anti-idealist position undertaken in the first Critique, Kant makes clear that God does not intervene directly in the course of human history, arguing that ‘having him who is himself the complete cause of the changes of the world complement his own predetermining providence during the course of the world (which therefore must have been deficient) … is firstly contradictory in itself.’ The postulation of a divine concursus, however, is perfectly appropriate and even necessary from a moral-practical perspective because ‘the belief that God will complement the lack of our own justice also by means incomprehensible to us if only our bent of the will was genuine,’ is required ‘that consequently we shall not slacken in our striving for the good.’ This striving for the good is only achievable through the pursuit of right, which despite his animality, is an idea of which ‘man just cannot rid himself,’ a persistence that ‘sanctions the theory of the ability to become adequate to it, everybody sees that he for his part must act according to it, others may do as they please.’

Kant’s ultimate reconciliation of the practical philosophy with itself in Toward Perpetual Peace revolves around this issue of how to achieve peace properly, which turns around this central test: ‘whether in tasks of practical reason the beginning must be made from the material principle of reason, the end (as the object of choice), or from the formal principle, that is, from that principle (restricted to external relations) according to which it runs,’ which is revealed to be a reiteration of the categorical imperative, ‘act that you can will your maxim to become a universal law (whatever that end may be).’ Kant’s answer is unambiguous: ‘[w]ithout any doubt the formal principle must precede, for as a principle of right, it has unconditional necessity,’ whereas any end, if is to be properly consistent with moral right, would have to be derived from the formal principles of external action. For the moral politician, operating according to a formal principle the achievement of perpetual peace ‘is a moral task … a world apart from the other [the political moralist/moralising politician] in the method of bringing about the eternal peace, which one now desires not merely as a physical good but also as a status resulting from an acknowledgment of duty.’ Kant repeats the point more forcefully later in the essay when he states that it is the concept of right ‘which alone could establish peace

110. TEPWS, p. 88.
111. TEPWS, p. 90n.
112. TEPWS, PP. 91-92n.
113. TEPWS, p. 92n.
114. TEPWS, p. 116.
115. TEPWS, p. 117.
116. TEPWS, p. 118.
117. TEPWS, pp. 118-119.
eternally."\textsuperscript{118} Prudence’s role is reduced to the negative task of reminding the moral reformer ‘not to force the end precipitately but to approach it unremittingly according to conditions of favourable circumstances.’\textsuperscript{119} In contrast to the uncertainty of the results attained by the exercise of technical practical reason and prudential judgment, the means and ends of pure practical reason are clear: expose deceits and point the way to the promised land of perpetual peace. It is hardly a coincidence that Kant expresses this principle by means of a gospel paraphrase: ‘seek ye first the kingdom of pure practical reason and its justice, and your end (the benefit of eternal peace) will fall to you of itself.’\textsuperscript{120} In his discussion of justice Kant makes a decisive move against interest and happiness being the wellspring of international relations by stating ‘political maxims must not start from a state’s welfare and happiness that is to be expected from their observance, thus not from the end each of them makes its object (from volition) as the highest (yet empirical) principle of state wisdom but from pure concepts of the duty of right (from the ought, the principle of which is given a priori by pure reason), whatever the physical consequences thereof may be.’\textsuperscript{121} In the purely rational terms of the practical philosophy ‘objectively (in theory) there is no conflict between moral doctrine and politics at all,’ although subjectively the conflict ‘will and may ever remain’ due to the self-seeking inclinations of human beings. Belief in human moral progress enables escape from the mechanism of nature by reference to ‘True politics,’ which cannot ‘take a step without having already paid homage to morals, and although politics by itself is a difficult art, its union with morals is no art at all; for as soon as the two conflict with each other, morals cuts the knot that politics cannot untie [emphasis added],’ it is only by embracing the moral, according to Kant, that politics can ‘hope to reach, though slowly, the level where it will shine unfaillingly.’\textsuperscript{122} It is for this reason that Kant believes providence and not nature is ultimately the foundation of perpetual peace: ‘for the moral principle in man is never extinguished, and reason, with pragmatic skill to execute legal ideas according to that principle, moreover grows continually through always advancing cultivation, with that, however, also the guilt of those transgressions’ with the ultimate effect being the supersession of the political by the moral as a consequence of the effects of both natural and rational processes playing themselves out according to their own internal logic. In order for this culmination of nature and reason to occur, however, a leap of faith is still necessary in that the process of perpetual peace must be believed to be achieved. Kant provides his most eloquent expression of this requirement in The Metaphysics of Morals:

> ‘the question is no longer whether perpetual peace is something real or a fiction, and whether we are not deceiving ourselves in our theoretical judgment when we assume that it is real. Instead, we must act as if it is something real, though perhaps it is not; we must work toward establishing perpetual peace and the kind of constitution that seems to us most conducive to it (say, a republicanism of all states, together and separately) in order to bring about perpetual peace and put an end to the heinous waging of war, to which as their chief aim all states without exception have hitherto directed their internal arrangements.’\textsuperscript{123}

Once the leap of faith is made, the conclusion Kant draws is that perpetual peace, the highest political good, and in effect the final, providentially ordained kingdom of pure practical reason, ‘is possible only in a federative union (which union is thus given a priori according to principles of right), and all state prudence has as its legal basis the institution of this union in its greatest

\textsuperscript{118} TEPWS, p. 123.  
\textsuperscript{119} TEPWS, p. 119.  
\textsuperscript{120} TEPWS, p. 119.  
\textsuperscript{121} TEPWS, p. 122.  
\textsuperscript{122} TPPPP, P. 347.  
\textsuperscript{123} Kant, Metaphysics of Morals, p. 491.
possible extent, without which objective all its sophistry is unwisdom and veiled injustice.  Kant therefore ultimately comes to his own version of the most Lutheran of conclusions: true salvation – in this case true perpetual peace - is achievable by faith alone.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{124} TEPWS, P. 131}\]