

PRUDENTIAL REASON IN KANT'S ANTHROPOLOGY

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For all pragmatic doctrines are doctrines of prudence, where for all our skills we also have the means to make proper use of everything. For we study human beings in order to become more prudent...[*Anthropology Friedländer* 25:471]¹

Anthropology should have a prudential or pragmatic orientation, according to Kant, a thought emphasized in the title of his 1798 “textbook,” *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. According to the *Parow* notes (1772-73) of an early lecture course on anthropology, Kant described prudence as “the capacity to choose the best means to our happiness,”[25:413] a description that fits well with his suggestion in the *Groundwork* that prudence is “skill in the choice of means to one’s own greatest well-being” or happiness, or “the insight to unite all [one’s own] purposes to his own enduring advantage”.[G 4:416]² While Kant is quick to contend that the prudent pursuit of well-being or happiness is not the only or the most dignified purpose of practical reason (this esteemed place is reserved for morality), he insists that, in a finite rational agent,

reason certainly has a commission from the side of his sensibility which it cannot refuse, to attend to its interest and to form practical maxims with a view to happiness in this life and, where possible, in a future life as well.[KpV 5:61]³

In fact, when he discusses this prudential “commission” in the *Religion*, Kant suggests that the exercise of prudence is both natural and *rational*.

To incorporate [self-love as good will toward oneself] into one’s maxim is natural (for who will not will that things always go well for him?). This love is, however, rational to the extent that, with respect to the end only what is consistent with the greatest and most abiding well-being is chosen, and that also the most apt means for each of these components of happiness are chosen. Here reason only occupies the place of a handmaiden to natural inclination...[R, 6:45n.]

It is proper, both natural and rational, Kant seems to say, that our own happiness or well-being always carries at least a certain weight in our deliberations.

Yet, recent work has often taken Kant's moral theory and its critique of eudaimonistic, hedonistic, and desire-based rivals to imply that happiness, well-being or satisfaction, taken by itself, cannot generate any reasons for action; that imprudence, even in the absence of contrary inclinations or moral demands, is not, by itself, a failure of practical rationality.⁴ Such claims seem to be supported by an influential interpretation of Kant's theory of value which suggests that the good will "functions as a source of the goodness of happiness in the sense of providing the reason to pursue it."⁵ This allegedly Kantian "source thesis" implies that, without a positive connection to a prior conception of moral value and moral norms, there is nothing *per se* irrational about imprudence. Aside from the unreasonableness of dishonesty, it would seem, there would be no further irrationality manifested by an imprudent "burglar who was caught because he sat down to watch television in the house he was burgling."⁶

In addition to the peculiarity of this result, several features of Kant's moral philosophy seem to count against imputation of the source thesis to him. His moral philosophy seems to presuppose prudential normativity, rather than ground it. Kant's arguments for the existence of duties of virtue, the obligatory positive ends he identifies as the happiness of others and one's own perfection, rely upon the idea that finite rational agents have their own happiness as an end. That there is this initial determination of the finite rational will to pursue happiness is crucial to the derivation of these duties.⁷ More importantly, it seems that an agent's prudential concerns, including his relatively determinate conception of happiness, play a critical role in the formulation of all particular maxims, without which he cannot act.⁸ The problem is that, if, as the source thesis implies, happiness or personal well-being were not an original, standing concern of a finite rational being, a concern with rational weight, then it is hard to imagine how prudential concerns or, for that matter, any determinate course of action, could ever be rationally pursued. The mere fact that a potential end *could* be pursued in a morally permissible way does not, by itself, give an agent any positive reason to pursue it. If the relation of an end to an agent's conception of happiness carries no rational weight in the first instance, it is hard to see why the further fact of moral permissibility would generate a reason to pursue it. It seems, rather, that there must be a sense in which, in Rawls's familiar terminology, the morally "reasonable" presupposes a serviceable conception of the prudentially "rational."⁹ I will argue that Kant articulated such a conception of prudential reason at several points in the development of his anthropology and of his theory of practical reason. On this account, helpfully manifested in the newly available anthropology lectures, prudence can be seen to be a genuine manifestation of rational agency, involving a distinctive sort of normative authority, an authority distinguishable from and conceptually prior to that of moral norms, though still overridable by them.¹⁰ In the present essay, I will not consider all of the potential

difficulties in reconciling such a conception with other aspects of Kant's thought nor will I directly settle questions about the "source thesis," rather I will present and explicate some of the key evidence for the presence of this account of prudence in Kant's anthropology.¹¹ First, I will argue that within the theory of rational agency found in the anthropology lectures and sketched in the moral philosophy, prudence involves the exercise of a distinctive, non-moral rational capacity. Second, I will argue that the anthropology lectures make an important contribution to the understanding of Kant's account of the distinctive prudential task. Despite Kant's familiar complaints about human finitude and the natural dialectic of our desires, he offers useful suggestions in those lectures about how prudential reflection can generate genuine practical guidance. Third, I examine a bit more closely Kant's suggestions that prudence can function prior to and independently of specifically moral capacities and norms. Even with significant developments in Kant's anthropological theory over the years, I will suggest, prudential norms can still be regarded as distinctive and conceptually independent of morality. Finally, I close with a brief discussion of Kant's account of the normative ground of prudential imperatives and a few of the implications this conception of prudence would seem to have for the relationship between prudence and morality in Kant's theory.

I

On Kant's account of rational agency or moral psychology, prudence is conceived of as the exercise of a distinctive practical capacity.¹² Unfortunately, a succinct summary of this account is impeded by the fact that none of his writings on practical philosophy is primarily intended to provide a general moral psychology or a general account of practical reason. While Kant's moral theory does not preclude an account of practical rationality in general, his primary focus in the ethical works is on the distinctive nature of the categorical requirements of pure practical reason, leaving little room for an extensive discussion of non-moral practical reason.¹³ Yet, in *Groundwork* II and in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant does sketch a general theory of practical rationality to prepare the way for his account of moral obligation. Kant introduces the *Metaphysics of Morals* with a discussion of the practical "faculties of the human mind" and a section subtitled "*philosophia practica universalis*." Similarly, early in the second section of the *Groundwork*, Kant declares his plan to "follow and present distinctly the practical faculty of reason, from its general rules of determination to the point where the concept of duty arises from it." [G 4:412] In the *Groundwork*, Kant seeks to uncover the supreme principle of morality by identifying several formulations of the categorical imperative, formulations derived from a consideration of the

formal features of practical principles, the alleged universality and necessity of the moral law, and its relationship to a specific conception of rational agency.¹⁴ A rational agent, he suggests, is a being with the capacity “to act in accordance with the representation of laws, i.e., in accordance with principles.”[G 4:412] “The will is thought of as a capacity to determine itself to action in conformity with the representation of certain laws. And such a capacity can be found only in rational beings.”[G 4:427] In his lectures and published writings on anthropology, Kant elaborates upon, among other things, the conception of our “practical faculties” hinted at in these familiar ethical texts.¹⁵ In particular, the anthropological discussions of freedom and character clarify the distinctive place that prudence occupies within Kant’s general conception of moral psychology.

Life, Kant suggests, (or at least the life of each member of a certain class of animals) involves the susceptibility to feelings of pleasure and pain and the capacity to act or behave in accordance with one’s own desires or representations.¹⁶ Within the context of “pragmatic” anthropology, Kant explicates this “faculty of desire” (*Begehrensvermögen*) or principle of action. As he taught his students in 1775-76,

The third faculty of the [human] soul is the faculty of desire. ... One cannot explain the desires exactly, yet to the extent it appertains to anthropology, it is then that [aspect] in the thinking being, which is the motive force in the physical world. It is the active power of self-determination of the actions of thinking beings. This is something subtle. ... All desires are directed to activity, for living beings do something according to the faculty of desire, and lifeless beings do something then when they are impelled by an outside force.”[25:577]

In general, “desire [*Begierde*] (*appetitus*) is the self-determination of a subject’s power through the representation of some future thing as an effect of that power.”[APH 7:251]¹⁷ Kant consistently emphasizes the way that desires are directed at action or activity and that the faculty of desire involves a kind of causal power. As he explained in the introduction to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, “the *faculty of desire* is the faculty to be, by means of one’s representations, the cause of the objects of these representations.”[MdS 6:211, cf. Reichel ms. p. 102] The conception of desire at issue in this “faculty of desire” involves much more than passive sensation; it has to do with willing and action, not mere feeling. A significant part of the anthropology course each year was devoted to analyzing and cataloguing the range of human conative elements (desires, inclinations, instincts, propensities, passions, etc.) and the range of objects to which they are directed.

Kant suggests that, in addition to the simple faculty of desire, some animals seem to have the ability to employ *concepts* or rules to make use of these desires and representations, a capacity that may lead to a further, genuinely practical capacity. “The faculty of desire in accordance with concepts, insofar as the ground determining it to action lies within itself and not in its object, is called the faculty to *do or refraining from doing as one pleases*.”[MdS 6:213]¹⁸ As Kant repeatedly emphasizes, in contrast to other animals, we human beings think that we can reflect on, judge, and act contrary to these desires and inclinations, and wish for better ones.[25:208-210; 411; 474] Although we do not have direct and immediate control over most of our desires, with effort and over time, we can strengthen or weaken many of them. Kant conceives of this as a special kind of causal power. We believe we possess the freedom “to make up our mind [*beschließen*] about which desires to act upon [*ausführen*]. This is the characteristic of human beings, since animals have instincts which they must blindly follow.”[25:1338] What allows the study of anthropology to be *pragmatic* is precisely the fact that we are able to make use of information about human beings (ourselves and others); this is what grounds the periodic counsel and recommendations for living well that we find throughout the lectures. “Prudence is the capacity to choose the best means to our happiness. Happiness consists in the satisfaction of all of our inclinations, and thus to be able to choose it, one must be free,” at least free from complete determination by one’s present desires.[25:413]

In the earliest anthropology lectures, Kant calls the capacity we have to freely make use of our faculties *character*. [25: 218; 426] By the mid-1770s, he began to associate character not just with relative spontaneity but specifically with the capacity to act on rules and principles: “Character is the employment of our power of choice [*Willkühr*] to act according to rules and principles, ... the origin of free actions from principles.”[25:630] And he maintains that character is a distinctive capacity of freely acting beings.[25: 625,630; 1174; 1384-5; 1530; Dohna ms. 309; Reichel ms. 122].

While it may be surprising to readers familiar with his “empirical determinism,” in the context of his pragmatic anthropology, Kant employs conceptions of the human practical capacities that presuppose spontaneity. In the anthropology lectures, arguments about the presence and exact nature of this spontaneity are generally avoided, but at numerous points it is clearly presupposed.¹⁹ Aside from claims like those we find in *Friedländer* about the difficulty of understanding the subtlety of this faculty and explaining how it works [25:577, 649-650], the lectures seem content to leave the details of spontaneity (or a justification for the lack of details) to be settled in ethical and metaphysical contexts.

In the *Groundwork*, Kant suggests that a rational being, a being with a free will, is a being that can act upon principle. The action of a rational agent is not behavior

completely caused by forces external to him; it is action on a general rule, a principle chosen in rational deliberation. Such a being can act not only in a way that is describable in a law-like way; he can act in the light of his adoption or recognition of principles. He has a capacity to really act *from* his concepts, rather than merely behave in accord with them.²⁰ This requires not only acting in accord with a principle, but also accepting it as a principle with some validity. Our putative capacity to reflect on and act contrary to our inclinations suggests a place for reason and judgment.²¹

While Kant does maintain in the anthropology lectures that character is characteristic of freely acting beings, he also insists that genuine acquaintance with acting on principle and the “strength of soul” involved in standing by one’s principles over time are not innate.²² In a claim that may be surprising to contemporary students of his moral philosophy, Kant claims that many human beings lack character altogether, never actually acting upon maxims, moral or otherwise. Such people are likened to “soft wax”: to the extent they ever adopt principles, they change them so constantly that the supposed principles are unable to provide any enduring shape to their behavior. [25:630-631; cf. 822-823, 1169, 1175, 1385, Reichel ms. 123-125] In this context, Kant regularly suggests that it is better to have an evil character than to be without character altogether. Genuine character, he notes, presupposes insight into principles and the judgment required to apply them; moreover, one must first be accustomed to acting according to principle as such before a specifically good or evil character can be formed. [25:633-635]

In the anthropology lectures, freedom from complete control by instinct plays an important role in Kant’s account of the origin of evil and the possibility of goodness. [25: 843, 1199, 1420] Conversely, Kant’s discussion of the origins of good and evil in the *Religion* help to clarify his account of human agency. Kant maintains that there is an original predisposition to good present in human nature which co-exists with a propensity to evil, and he subdivides this “predisposition to good” into three further practical predispositions.²³ First, there is a “predisposition to animality”. This predisposition is manifested in a “physical and merely mechanical self-love, i.e., a love for which reason is not required.” Such animalistic behavior is directed by natural instincts toward self-preservation, the propagation of the species, and community with others. Second, there is a “predisposition to humanity” which manifests itself in a “self-love which is physical and yet involves comparison (for which reason is required); that is, only in comparison with others does one judge oneself happy or unhappy.”²⁴ Third, there is the “predisposition to personality” which involves “the susceptibility to respect for the moral law as of itself a sufficient incentive to the will.” Kant insists that human beings necessarily have all three of these predispositions, that each predisposition is inextirpable in human nature. He also specifically points

out that these three predispositions are distinct and can be distinguished in terms of the kinds of practical rationality they presuppose: “animal” behavior does not require reason or judgment at all; “human” action involves comparison and “is indeed rooted in practical reason, but only as it is subservient to other incentives”; action which is expressive of personality involves more than just spontaneity and the presence of judgment. Personality presupposes a special kind of judgment; it “alone is rooted in reason which is practical of itself, i.e., in reason legislating unconditionally.” Personality is conceived of as positive freedom, the freedom to act out of respect for the moral law. It is in virtue of this special capacity that someone can be considered a moral agent: while humanity is a feature of the human being considered as a rational being, personality is a feature of the human being considered as a “rational and at the same time [morally] responsible” (*der Zurechnung fähigen*) being.[R 6:26-28]²⁵ Interestingly, “humanity” seems to presuppose genuine spontaneity even though Kant had become convinced, in the late 1780s, that there is no theoretical argument to prove that we have this genuine spontaneity and that only “personality” or the “fact of reason”, the consciousness of the moral law, can ground our philosophical cognition of such spontaneity.²⁶ In the anthropology lectures, Kant does not explicitly identify and distinguish these three predispositions described in the *Religion*, but the lectures do contain extended discussions of the tension between humanity and animality. They also contain discussions of related trichotomies. Kant typically introduced a three-way division between skill, prudence, and wisdom or morality.[25:412-413; 855-856; 1211; 1435] In the 1798 *Anthropology*, we do find a tri-partite subdivision of practical predispositions which bears a certain resemblance to the analysis in the *Religion*. In a section devoted to determining the “character of the human species,” Kant suggests that human beings are distinguished from other living beings on earth by, first, a *technical* predisposition which enables us to manipulate things; second, a *pragmatic* predisposition which enables us to use others for our ends; and third, a *moral* predisposition which enables us to treat ourselves and others consistent with freedom under laws.²⁷ Rather than reading differences between these accounts as evidence of a deep inconsistency or significant change in doctrine, I believe such differences primarily reflect a difference in context.²⁸ In the discussions of the “character of the species” found in *Menschenkunde*, *Mrongovius* and *Busolt* notes, Kant often discusses the practical capacities in terms of one or another two-way rather than three-way contrasts: for example, in terms of a tension between between prudence and skill, between humanity and animality, between intelligence and animality, between a conception of oneself as being with personality and as an animal, between the human being as animal and as a free being, or between the *homo noumenon* and *homo phenomenon*. Sometimes this seems to be a matter of selective focus, while in other cases, one or the other term seems silently to subsume the absent third

term. This fluidity in terminology and points of contrast comes to the fore when the trichotomy of skill, prudence, and wisdom is compared with the related distinction, familiar in ethical contexts, between technical, prudential or pragmatic, and moral imperatives.²⁹ For example, in the anthropology course, Kant typically focused upon the contrast between skill and prudence, whereas in the ethics course, he typically emphasized the contrast between prudence and wisdom or morality.³⁰

Although there are some differences and developments in the account of the practical predispositions provided across the anthropology lectures, the published *Anthropology*, the *Religion*, and the familiar ethical texts, there is substantial evidence that Kant consistently conceived of prudence as the exercise of a distinctive capacity, one distinguishable from specifically moral capacities.

II

The anthropology lectures do not only identify prudence with a distinctive practical capacity; they also provide some detail to Kant's account of prudential reflection. As Kant suggested in the *Religion*, prudence seems to involve two interrelated tasks: one focused on choosing as an end "only what it consistent with the greatest and most abiding well-being"; the other on choosing "the most apt means for each of these components of happiness." [R 6:45n.]³¹ The anthropology lectures contain important reflections on each aspect of this ambitious undertaking.

If prudence is to have any practical significance, the concept of this prudential end, i.e., well-being or happiness, must be filled in and concretized. On Kant's account, happiness or well-being is at least partially determined by one's needs and desires.³² So, it is tempting to begin such an account with the fact that finite rational beings all have inclinations, including many natural and ineradicable inclinations,³³ but, as Kant consistently emphasizes, the shape of these needs and inclinations is very plastic. *Friedländer*, for example, contains sections entitled "On the Variability of the Desires" and "On the Object of Inclination" which elaborate upon the way we displace or replace our instinctual drives and desires with new drives and inclinations. [25:578-588; 1362ff] In the anthropology lectures and his historical essays, Kant proposes a broad quasi-Rousseauian history of how, over time, a natural dialectic has changed the shape of human inclinations from an exclusive concern with basic physical needs to involve a powerful attachment to complex social, aesthetic and even moral values. In addition, he notes how the particular inclinations vary within cultures as well. Different individuals have different inclinations³⁴ and the inclinations of each individual change significantly over time. [25: 580-581]³⁵ Moreover, our desires and inclinations regularly come into conflict with one another. [25:578, 580,586,590-591]³⁶ And human contentment is fleeting.³⁷ It is not in our nature

to remain satisfied; once one desire or group of desires is fulfilled, another inevitably arises.³⁸

These considerations are part of the support for Kant's claims that we have a multiplicity of ends [25:438] and a complex interest [25:590;208;1140-41]. Part of prudence's task is to harmonize the inclinations into a whole so that they do not "chafe" against one another.[R 6:58]³⁹ Reason should direct instinct [25:1150] and resolve conflicts between inclinations and more generally, unite or harmonize an agent's various ends. As Kant explained in the first *Critique*,

in the doctrine of prudence, the unification of all ends that are given to us by our inclinations into the single end of happiness and the harmonization of the means for attaining that end constitute the entire business of reason.[KrV A800/B828]

This is no small challenge.⁴⁰

It may appear that Kant thinks this is a fruitless endeavor, given his pessimism about the attainability of happiness. Readers of the *Groundwork*, for example, are familiar with his comments about the status and "phenomenology" of prudential advice.[G 4:418-419] Kant emphasizes how difficult it is to know what human happiness requires when inclinations are so variable and so fickle. This epistemic problem translates into an immense practical problem for human prudence.⁴¹ Kant insists that the conclusions of prudential reasoning are hard to come by and much less certain than our conclusions about our moral obligations, and that our limited power hampers our pursuit of happiness. Kant also became convinced that, on the whole, human life involves more pain than pleasure.⁴² At times, such observations seem to push Kant to the brink of despair about humans even approximating a state of complete happiness in this life, as his worries about "misology" in the *Groundwork* attest.[G 4:395] What he does conclude is that our limited knowledge and the instability of our desires render prudential reflection primarily a form of advice based on averages and educated though fallible predictions, rather than a set of absolute, non-negotiable commands.[G 4:428]⁴³ But it is important to note that, on their own, these claims about the nature of human inclinations and the limits of our power and knowledge do not compromise the rational basis of prudential reasons. Even in the *Groundwork*, Kant maintains that prudential counsel still involves rational necessity.[G 4:416] The anthropology lectures reveal hints about how prudential reflection may be of genuine practical value. When it comes to the end of prudence, Kant suggests a number of dimensions along which we may analyze and compare our ends and the desires we have for them, dimensions which do not seem readily reducible to a single phenomenological feature of strength or intensity. Some desires certainly

are phenomenologically stronger than others; some dominate our thoughts and our attention and color our perceptions to a greater degree; similarly the satisfaction of some desires may dominate our thoughts because of its particular intensity. Such desires involve a risk of negatively influencing our judgment and the exercise of reason.⁴⁴ Some desires are closely linked to our physical and psychological needs. Some desires are more persistent features of our lives than others: they are longer-lasting and harder to eradicate. They may provide a certain sort of continuity or stability, or conversely may pose a long-term challenge or frustration. Some are easier to manage or less addictive: they do not as easily grow to dominate or take control of our mental lives. Others are more dangerous. Some desires are easier to satisfy than others. Some of our desires may be disciplined, transformed or cultivated to become finely-grained (producing what Kant calls luxury), or redirected, or they may open new horizons of experience. Some of our desires and some of their objects fit well with our conceptions of ourselves, while others do not. Each of these factors seems to have a role to play in our reasoning and judgments about the constituents and structure of our own well-being or happiness.[25:579; 1516-1517]⁴⁵

In addition to these useful observations about the determination of the prudential end, the anthropology lectures also elaborate upon the other side of prudence's task. In a discussion of all-purpose means (what he calls the "formal inclinations") Kant emphasizes that the freedom to pursue our happiness as we conceive of it and resources such as health, strength, skill, money, and the respect or cooperation of others are each critical for achieving our ends, whatever they are.[25:214, 417, 581, 798, 1141, 1354, 1520] Likewise, Kant emphasizes that character is of pragmatic significance because happiness cannot be attained without stable principles.[25:1089, 1519]

Ultimately, Kant concludes that the balance of prudential considerations favors a life of self-control, the pursuit of equanimity, and learning to do without unnecessary and unattainable (or unsustainable) satisfactions.[25:561-563; 1082; Reichel ms. p. 76]⁴⁶ Though this quick summary of anthropological observations about prudential reflection may not be sufficient to ground a unique, fully determinate conception of happiness or a detailed account of all of the means necessary for achieving it, it does suggest how rational reflection may genuinely guide human agents in the pursuit of well-being, perhaps even independently of specifically moral considerations.

III

To this point, we have considered Kant's suggestions about the prudential capacity and its exercise more or less in abstraction from moral considerations.

Given the title of the 1798 *Anthropology* and the “pragmatic” or prudential point of view it shares with the anthropology course, we might expect that Kant’s discussions of prudence would proceed in exactly this way. Yet the evidence from the anthropology lectures appears more mixed. Kant’s treatment of character, for example, is of obvious relevance to moral philosophy, and more generally, the pragmatic anthropology so frequently ventures into moral territory that it might seem to suggest that prudence is fundamentally dependent upon morality.⁴⁷ Nonetheless I contend that on Kant’s theory, prudence may involve a form of practical reflection that can function prior to and independently of moral capacities and norms. After presenting some of the key textual evidence for this claim, I will develop it in response to two important objections.

A recurrent theme of both the *Anthropology* and the anthropology lectures is the conflict and tension between our “humanity” and our “animality.” Kant’s perennial analysis of two manifestations of this tension implies that prudential reflection possesses a certain independence from morality. First, Kant’s pet example concerning the desire for the propagation of the species suggest this conclusion. By the age of fifteen or sixteen, Kant says, man in his natural state is capable of reproducing and maintaining his offspring and is impelled by his instincts to do so. Yet, in the context of society and a civil state, he observes, a prudent man recognizes that he must wait until he is twenty (on average) or twenty-five (in the more refined classes) or even thirty years old, so that he is in a position to support his wife and children. This five to ten year (or longer) “interval of forced and unnatural celibacy” results from a tension between animality and humanity that is at root pre-moral (though not entirely pre-social).[25: 682, 839, 1197,1418-9; APH 7:325; MAM 8:116] While Kant argues that this tension may ultimately serve a moral purpose in the course of history, and while morality has something to say about how this tension should be resolved [MdS 6:424f.], the fundamental tension is not itself specifically moral. This tension between humanity, on the one hand, and the influence of our animal instincts, on the other, need not presuppose a specifically moral predisposition, “personality,” or an ability to act out of respect for the moral law.⁴⁸

Second, Kant’s treatment of our instincts and the nature of emotions and passions suggests a similar conclusion about the status of prudence. Kant claims that non-human animals, while they can experience pleasures and pains, cannot be happy or suffer distress because they cannot reflect upon their condition.[25:248,474] He emphasizes, in contrast, that in human beings, reason is empowered to reflect upon, control and modify our instinctual ends and the feelings and desires that direct us to pursue them. On Kant’s account, emotions (*Affekten*) and passions (*Leidenschaften*) are feelings or desires, respectively, which render us unable to assess something in terms of its relation to our overall sensation or to the sum total of our desires, that is, emotions and passions render us unable to exercise

prudence and may even preclude us from acting skillfully in the pursuit of particular ends.[25:590; 208; 1140-1141] Emotions and passions are mental agitations that involve a loss of composure; they can function like a cloud of smoke, hindering or distorting our vision, perhaps even temporarily blinding us.[25:1121]⁴⁹ Our animality is manifested in the fact that our instincts predispose us to certain emotions which can lead us to our instinctual ends independently of our rational reflection. Nature has predisposed us to these instinctual emotions; thereby providing for stages of human development in which the capacity to reason is insufficiently developed. While Hume had suggested that reason would likely lead to our demise were instinct not generally overpowering in ordinary life, Kant argues that the predisposition to instinctual emotions is present in us only *provisionally*, until reason can take over.[25:208; 616;796;1120; 1342; 1524] While our instincts direct us to “wise ends,” Kant argues, reason and reflection lead to those ends more effectively and with greater certainty than our instincts or blind passions ever could.[25:1120, 1524]⁵⁰ This reinforces Kant’s stoic conclusion that emotions and passions should be controlled and not intentionally cultivated or strengthened. We need to avoid the influence of emotions and passions and “rule ourselves” so that we are in a position to choose and pursue the happiest life.[25:1516] What is noteworthy about this line of thought in the anthropology lectures is its reliance upon prudential rather than specifically moral considerations.⁵¹

Such anecdotal evidence of prudence’s independence is reinforced by Kant’s historical treatment of the practical predispositions. Kant regularly suggests that we can view the historical development of human beings and human culture in terms of a sequential development of our rational capacities. In his essay on the *Speculative Beginning of Human History*, for example, Kant distinguished four stages of human rational development (rather than the familiar three), only the fourth of which includes a developed capacity for morality. Similarly, as we saw earlier, Kant is recorded in the *Friedländer* notes insisting that the development of a good or evil character is subsequent to the development of character in general. This developmental conception of the practical predispositions implies that the prudential component of practical reason has a certain historical and perhaps even conceptual priority to morality and that it may be able to function independently of the moral component.⁵²

This suggestion is confirmed in an important footnote to the *Religion’s* philosophical treatment of the practical predispositions. Kant explicitly claims that the predispositions to humanity and personality are not only conceptually distinct but that possession of the former does not entail or presuppose possession of the latter. As he explained,

... from the fact that a being has reason [it] does not at all follow that, simply by virtue of representing its maxims as suited to universal legislation, this reason contains a faculty of determining the power of choice unconditionally, and hence to be ‘practical’ on its own; at least not so far as we can see. The most rational being in this world might still need certain incentives, coming to him from the objects of inclination, to determine his power of choice. He might apply the most rational reflection to [these objects] – about what concerns the greatest sum of these incentives as well as the means for attaining the end thereby determined - without thereby even suspecting the possibility of such a thing as the absolutely imperative moral law which proclaims itself to be itself an incentive...[R 6:26-27n.]⁵³

The prudential capacities involved in humanity are distinguishable from the specifically moral capacity of personality, the capacity to be determined to action by pure practical reason, by respect for the moral law. Moreover, the capacity for prudential rationality need not presuppose the complete autonomy or “motivational independence” involved in moral “personality,” the susceptibility to a particular form of influence by pure practical reason.⁵⁴ Although Kant does not believe that there are beings subject to prudential norms yet not subject to categorical moral norms, he does insist that it is *possible*, at least “so far as we can see” that there are. This implies that, on Kant’s account, the authority of prudential rationality is, in this limited yet important sense, independent of moral rationality.

But, it may be objected, might such claims about prudence’s independence be taken only as claims about moral psychology and epistemology? Might they not amount to nothing more than the thought that an agent could be *aware* of one set of demands (the prudential) without realizing that he is *also* obligated by another set (moral obligations)?⁵⁵

In reply, it is important to note why it is, on Kant’s account, that a person with humanity but not personality would fail to recognize that he has moral obligations. On Kant’s account, moral obligation is grounded in personality or autonomy, the capacity to be motivated by pure practical reason, to act out of respect for the moral law. This entails that one could not lack personality and yet be categorically bound by the moral law. A genuine lack of personality is more than a cognitive limitation (the inability to recognize that one has moral obligations); it implies that one does not have such moral obligations (though one may still have prudential reasons to behave as if one had moral obligations). A person with humanity but not personality would stand under prudential imperatives, but not be subject to moral obligation.⁵⁶ This implies that the

fundamental normative authority of prudential imperatives does not depend upon that of moral imperatives.

Yet, this conclusion is subject to a second objection, one stemming from further examination of Kant's reflections on the nature of human happiness or well-being. As we have already seen, Kant worried about the problems posed by the plasticity of and conflict among our needs and desires. Our desires could turn out to be configured so that, even with perfect information and thorough prudential reflection, their reconciliation or harmonization would be impossible.⁵⁷ The depth of Kant's reflection on these Rousseauian concerns is reflected in a feature of Kant's treatment of prudence that we have not yet considered. The tri-partite divisions of practical predispositions, at least those found in the *Religion* and the 1798 *Anthropology*, manifest a profoundly social conception of prudence. Kant repeatedly emphasized that the process of displacing and replacing our instinctual drives with new drives is markedly intensified and ramified by living in society with others.[25:585] (The "comparison with others" mentioned in the *Religion's* account of the predisposition to humanity is part of this.) In fact, one of the most significant developments in Kant's conception of prudence over the course of the anthropology lectures is an increasing emphasis upon the significance of the human social context. The problem for the current thesis about the independence of prudence is that this emerging social emphasis may seem to presuppose moral considerations. To address this objection, then, it is necessary to examine this development more closely and consider its implications for claims about the independence of prudence.

Kant comes to emphasize the fact that those around us influence our conception of happiness in many ways, both obvious and subtle. Observing what others are like, what they have, and how they live may inspire changes in my own pursuits or may trigger jealousy and a competitive impulse to acquire what they have. Furthermore, I need cooperation from, or at least toleration by others to achieve my personal ends. In many cases, other people are the most important means to the attainment of my ends. In fact, in the later anthropology lectures, Kant comes to classify our influence over others as the most important of the "formal inclinations" or all-purpose means.[25:1141; 1355,1520; cf. APH 8:271] In light of these insights, Kant becomes increasingly convinced that the pursuit of happiness in society depends upon an understanding of these dynamics, an understanding which reveals, he concludes, that a prudent individual seeks to conform himself to the ways of his fellows, seeks to be intelligible and interesting to them, and avoids being perceived as "difficult" or provoking their distrust, envy, or pride. [25:1210,1363-64; 1436] By the *Menschenkunde* notes from 1781-82, Kant begins to identify prudence, not with the broad "skill in the choice of means to one's own greatest well-being," but more narrowly as the *skillful use of other people*, as opposed to things, in the pursuit of one's own ends.[APH

8:322; 25:855,1037,1296,1436]⁵⁸ On such a conception, the allegedly independent authority of imperatives aimed at individual well-being may seem to be compromised.

Yet there are several reasons to reject this suggestion. First, it is important not to conflate actual interaction and co-operation between prudential and moral norms with a necessary connection between them. Since Kant was convinced that human beings possess the predispositions to both humanity and personality and that we are subject to both moral and prudential imperatives, it is unsurprising that his discussions of human nature and the practical life include an account which aims to integrate both.⁵⁹ But this does not establish that prudential normativity must presuppose moral normativity.

Second, it must be noted that the social emphasis which emerged in Kant's account of "prudence" does not indicate a fundamental change in the conception of prudence: the *Mrongovius* notes from 1784-85, for example, still consider prudence in both the narrower and broader senses [25:1210] and the *Groundwork* attends to both when it distinguishes between "world prudence" and "private prudence".⁶⁰ Thus, it seems that the deeply social conception which emerges *supplements* without entirely replacing the earlier conception,⁶¹ as well it should, given the conceptual, not merely genetic, dependence of the former upon the latter. A deep understanding of social dynamics is important precisely because they constitute a critical challenge for prudence, more broadly conceived. As Kant himself observed, the value of "skill in the use of people" is determined by its contribution to our well-being, otherwise it is merely clever (*gescheit*) or cunning (*verschlagen*).[G 4:416n.]

Third, we must distinguish compliance with conventional social norms, which, on this account, is of great prudential significance, from compliance with genuine moral norms, which may or may not be prudentially significant. Since extant social norms do not necessarily coincide with moral norms, the prudential importance of social norms does not entail that prudential norms presuppose moral norms. Finally, it must be noted that even if there were a prudential justification for acting in accord with genuine moral rules it would not reveal a fundamental dependence of prudential capacities or normativity upon moral normativity since, on Kant's mature moral theory, action merely in accord with moral rules, motivated entirely by self-interest, need not involve the specifically moral capacities or the specifically moral demand.⁶² An argument for conformity to moral norms which emerges from prudential reflection, while it may provide a *simulacrum* of morality and serve as a preparation for virtue, remains a prudential argument.⁶³ Thus, despite the additional complexity it introduces, the growing social emphasis within Kant's conception of prudence remains consistent with the suggested normative independence of prudence.

IV

In the *Groundwork*, Kant claims that there is an “imperative that refers to the choice of means to one’s own happiness,” which he calls the precept of prudence.[G 4:416] Since, as he explains, “imperatives are only formulae expressing the relation of objective laws of volition in general to the subjective imperfection of the will of this or that rational being,”[G 4:414] he seems committed to the existence of an objective principle of volition directing rational agents to exercise prudence. The foregoing consideration of the anthropology lectures and related texts has helped to identify a conception of the distinctive capacities required by such an imperative and clarify how prudential reflection could provide practical guidance. In particular, it has helped to explicate and elaborate Kant’s suggestions that prudential norms can have genuine authority, independent of morality. On this account, human beings have a standing reason to pursue their well-being or happiness.⁶⁴

Ultimately, the interpretive and philosophical adequacy of this account are tied up with the resolution of least two important concerns to which it gives rise. First, there is a genuine question about what grounds there could be, independent of morality, “on which a rational being should form the idea of an overall sum of satisfaction and subordinate its particular desires to this idea.”⁶⁵ Second, there is the question about the possible fit between this account of prudence and Kant’s familiar claims about the supremacy of morality. While neither question can be decisively answered here, in the space that remains, I will briefly suggest some promising lines of thought.

In response to the first question, consider the way Kant connects the rational authority of prudence with the idea that it is natural for a finite rational being to adopt his own happiness as an end. In his ethical writings, we find a number of closely related claims about the role of happiness. Sometimes he emphasizes that there is a natural *desire* for happiness: happiness is “necessarily the desire [*Verlangen*] of every rational but finite being” and “an unavoidable determining ground [*Bestimmungsgrund*] of his faculty of desire”. [KpV 5:25, cf. G 4:399] But Kant insists that this desire is more than just an instinctual urge. He speaks of the universal *wish* for happiness,⁶⁶ and even insists that all (or at least all imperfect) rational beings *will* their own happiness and that it is “the natural end [*Naturzweck*] all human beings have”[G 4:430], “an end [*Zweck*] every human has (by virtue of the impulses of his nature)” which he wills unavoidably.[MdS 6:386].⁶⁷ Happiness is an end all people have by natural necessity, “a purpose [*Absicht*] that can be presupposed with certainty and *a priori* [to be present] in every human being, because it belongs to his essence.”[G 4:415-16] It is “the subjective final end [*Endzweck*] of rational beings in this world” which we have

“by virtue of [our] nature which is dependent upon sensible objects”. [R 6:6n.] Particular non-moral ends acquire prudential significance to the extent they are constituents of our well-being. What constitutes our happiness or well-being is, at least in part, a function of the wise ends set for us by our nature and transformed by our choices and historical and social forces. [25:438, 1524] Yet, unlike other animals, our nature does not guarantee that we clearly conceive of this end, nor that we pursue it in action. In finite rational beings like us, Kant suggests, these are tasks or commissions assigned to rational reflection.⁶⁸

One thing that is puzzling about these suggestions is that they seem to imply that our having of this necessary end (our own well-being or happiness) and our pursuit of it are simultaneously a fact and a task. Regardless of how this puzzle might be resolved, Kant seems to think that the claim that finite rational beings necessarily will their own happiness supports the further claim that prudence is an objective requirement of practical reason. As he explains,

The hypothetical imperative that represents the practical necessity of an action as a means to the promotion of happiness is *assertoric*. It may be set forth not merely as necessary to some uncertain, merely possible purpose but to a purpose that can be presupposed with certainty and *a priori* [to be present] in every human being, because it belongs to his essence. Now skill in the choice of means to one’s own greatest well-being can be called *prudence* in the narrowest sense. Hence, the imperative that refers to the choice of means to one’s own happiness, i.e., the precept of prudence, is still always *hypothetical*; the action is not commanded absolutely but only as a means to another purpose. [G 4:415-16]

Kant suggests that prudential imperatives possess rational weight for finite rational beings like us precisely because happiness is a necessary end for us. The rational requirement of prudence is, in Kant’s terms, at once hypothetical and assertoric: this end is grounded in a “subjective condition,” but it is a condition that in fact obtains. The thought seems to be that since each finite rational agent necessarily wills his own happiness as an end and reason directs him to will the means to his ends, it follows that he has a reason to will the means to his own happiness.⁶⁹ In essence, prudence is required by an application of the requirement of “The Hypothetical Imperative” to the fact that finite agents necessarily will their own happiness. On this understanding of Kant’s account, the determinate action of finite rational beings is shaped by a standing interest in prudential ends. A finite, prudentially rational agent begins, in a sense, by aiming at happiness or well-being. He adopts particular ends and desires that present themselves as

constituents of this end and proceeds via reflection to bracket or pare off particular ends or desires that appear to conflict with it.

As it stands, this account of the normative authority of prudence is certainly incomplete. In addition to the questions it raises about happiness being a necessary end, it leaves unclear, for example, precisely what Kant thinks is irrational about pursuing a particular end or object of desire in the face of one's clear overall well-being. Perhaps the idea is that, since well-being is a *necessary* end, if the pursuit of a particular non-moral end invariably conflicts with one's overall well-being, then the only rational way to resolve the conflict would be to abandon the end which can be rationally abandoned, namely the particular end. Of course, the adequacy of this suggestion would depend upon a satisfactory account of why and in what sense(s) happiness should be considered a necessary end.

As for the question concerning the relation between prudential and moral norms, we have already noted that Kant was convinced that human beings are subject to both moral and prudential imperatives. He is committed to there being an account of practical reason that integrates both kinds of norms and, in particular, preserves the supremacy of the categorical imperative.⁷⁰ The moral law is, he suggests, supreme or overriding: it requires the adoption of certain obligatory ends and it demands that moral agents "abstract" from any ends the pursuit of which would conflict with the demands of morality.⁷¹ On the present account of prudence, nothing explicitly precludes Kant's claims that in the case of an agent with moral personality, rational reflection upon one's ends demands something more than prudence and that, in cases of conflict, some of these other demands, as a rule, override the prudential demands.⁷² When overridden in this way, genuine prudential demands may leave a "residue"; this is why morality may be genuinely *costly*. Much more needs to be said, but as long as there may be a rational resolution to such conflicts, it is not obvious that morality's supremacy entails that the reason-giving force of prudence is merely apparent or ultimately derivative from moral normativity.⁷³

In conclusion, if the argument of this paper is correct, on the conception of prudence persistently suggested in Kant's anthropology lectures and related texts, prudence involves genuine demands of its own, demands which need not presuppose or be derived from an account of the demands of morality, though the former demands may still cohere with and yield to the latter's supremacy. This account of prudence does have at least one important moral implication. It implies that there may be no generic argument against forms of moral skepticism which acknowledge the authority of prudential norms while denying the authority and/or supremacy of categorical norms.⁷⁴ This seems to be part of what Kant was suggesting when, in the *Religion*, he distinguished "humanity" and "personality" and explicitly conceded the possibility of non-moral rational agency.⁷⁵ Kant's

critique of practical reason may certainly help to undermine skeptical arguments against the possibility and reality of categorical moral norms. Such arguments may prepare the skeptic to acknowledge the “fact of reason”: that he is bound by the moral law. Nonetheless, this recognition and the associated recognition of the special value involved in acting autonomously⁷⁶ are distinct from the recognition of prudential norms and need not be inconsistent with the genuine authority of prudential norms.⁷⁷

NOTES

¹ Apart from the *Critique of Pure Reason*, all references to Kant are to the volume and page number of the “*Akademie-Ausgabe*.” [*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (formerly the Königlich-Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 29 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902-)] References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard A and B pagination of the first and second editions. Specific published works are cited by means of the abbreviations listed below.

- KrV *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [Critique of Pure Reason]. 1st ed. [A], 1781; 2nd ed. [B], 1787.
- G *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* [Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals]. 1st ed., 1785; 2nd ed., 1786.
- MAM *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* [Speculative Beginning of Human History] 1786.
- KpV *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* [Critique of Practical Reason]. 1788.
- KU *Kritik der Urteilskraft* [Critique of Judgment]. 1st ed., 1790; 2nd ed., 1793; 3rd ed., 1799.
- R *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* [Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone] 1st ed., 1793; 2nd ed., 1794.
- TP *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis* [On the Proverb: That may be true in theory, but it is of no use in practice]. 1793.
- MdS *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* [The Metaphysics of Morals]. 1st ed., 1797; 2nd ed. 1798.

APH *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* [Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View]. 1st ed., 1798; 2nd ed., 1800.

Citations to the recently published critical editions of student notes from Kant's lectures on anthropology are cited to the pagination in volume 25 of *Akademie-Ausgabe*.

<i>Collins</i>	(1772-73)	25: 1-238
<i>Parow</i>	(1772-73)	25: 239-463
<i>Friedländer</i>	(1775-76)	25: 465-728
<i>Pillau</i>	(1777-78)	25: 729-847
<i>Menschenkunde</i>	(1781-82 (?))	25: 849-1203
<i>Mrongovius</i>	(1784-85)	25: 1205-1429
<i>Busolt</i>	(1788-89 (?))	25: 1431-1531

Translations from G, KpV, MdS are based upon the translations of Mary Gregor in *Practical Philosophy* (1996); from R on the translation by George di Giovanni in *Religion and Rational Theology* (1996); from KrV upon the translation by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood in *Critique of Practical Reason* (1997), all part of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*.

Translations of passages from the Friedländer notes are based upon Felicitas Munzel's translation for the forthcoming *Cambridge Edition* volume of the *Lectures on Anthropology*. Many thanks to her for sharing an advance version of her work and many helpful comments on this paper. I have occasionally modified these translations as I have seen fit. References to the "Reichel", "Dohna" and "anon-Berlin" manuscripts follow the manuscript pagination; transcriptions of these texts are available in the Internet at the Marburg Kant-Archiv website. Citations to *Reflexionen* and student notes from Kant's lectures on ethics are made by reference to the reflection number or

common title for the set of notes, followed by the volume and page number from the *Akademie-Ausgabe*.

² As Patrick Frierson has emphasized, Kant's conception of the "pragmatic" and even of "prudence" is sometimes broader than a concern with one's own happiness. See his *Freedom and Anthropology in Kant's Moral Philosophy: Saving Kant from Schleiermacher's Dilemma* (dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 2001). esp. ch.3. In fact, as we will see below, some passages even suggest a narrower conception of prudence. Nevertheless, the language and content of the anthropology suggest that the current sense of prudence and the pragmatic are a significant, though not exclusive, part of Kant's concerns there. Final revisions of this paper have benefited significantly from Frierson's comments and contact with his work.

Especially when it comes to historical discussions of Kant's theory of practical reason, it is unfortunately appropriate to maintain the "generic" use of masculine pronouns, since sexist aspects of Kant's anthropological theory leave the status of women somewhat ambiguous.

³ cf. G 4:395-96

⁴ See, for example, Thomas Hill, Jr., "Kant's Theory of Practical Reason," *Monist* 72: 363-383 (1989); T.H. Irwin, "Kant's Criticisms of Eudaemonism," in Engstrom and Whiting (eds.), *Aristotle, Kant and the Stoics: Rethinking Happiness and Virtue*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 63-101.

⁵ Henry E. Allison, *Idealism and Freedom: Essays on Kant's Theoretical and Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). [Hereafter *IF*], p. 114. This is Allison's summary of the implications of Stephen Engstrom's claim that "for Kant there is an

important sense in which we would not be bound by imperatives at all if we were not bound by the categorical imperative,” a claim which Allison rejects. Stephen E. Engstrom, “Allison on Rational Agency,” *Inquiry* 36 (1993): 405-418. p. 413. cf. Korsgaard’s claim that “the view that there are only hypothetical imperatives is not only false, but *incoherent*.” Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, ed. Onora O’Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). p. 164n. Korsgaard suggests that instrumental and prudential reasons should be treated as merely *prima facie* reasons or “candidate reasons” which possess no real reason-giving force of their own. Christine M. Korsgaard, “Aristotle and Kant on the Source of Value,” *Ethics* 96 (1986): 486-505. [Hereafter, “AKSV”] p. 487. See also Christine M. Korsgaard, “The Normativity of Instrumental Reason,” in *Ethics and Practical Reason*, ed. Garrett Cullity and Berys Gaut (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 215-254. [Hereafter, “NIR”], p. 247n.65. See also Barbara Herman, “Leaving Deontology Behind,” in *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 208-240. p. 209. For two recent discussions of the implications such a theory has for physician-assisted suicide, see J. David Velleman, “A Right of Self-Termination?,” *Ethics* 109 (1999): 606-628. and F. M. Kamm, “Physician-Assisted Suicide, the Doctrine of Double Effect, and the Ground of Value,” *Ethics* 109 (1999): 586-605.

⁶ Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford: Oxford, 2001), p. 14.

⁷ See, for example, KpV 5:34-35.

⁸ The action of finite rational beings seems to presuppose the presence of desire-based ends, but of course this is not to say that the action of such beings must always be motivated by desire for such ends. See Allen Wood, *Kant’s Moral Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970). [Hereafter, *KMR*] p. 57; and Henry Allison, *Kant’s Theory of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). [Hereafter, *KTF*] pp. 65, 97 and *IF*, p. 111.

⁹ John Rawls, *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 164-167; cf. Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 214-215.

¹⁰ In other words, following Allison, I will be suggesting that on Kant's theory, instrumental or prudential "rationality has its own sphere and its own logic- I am almost tempted to say its own autonomy- which holds independently of any moral considerations." Allison, *IF* p. 114. Although Allison mentions only "instrumental rationality," he seems to have in mind both prudential and instrumental reasoning, more narrowly understood. On Allison's reading, needs and desires provide a source of reasons to act that is not dependent upon the moral law. *IF*, pp. 126; 135.

¹¹ For one recent discussion of the "source thesis," see Samuel Kerstein, "Korsgaard's Kantian Arguments for the Value of Humanity," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31(2001):23-52.

¹² For the sake of brevity, this section abstracts from a number of interesting and important developmental shifts in Kant's conception of agency and neglects a number of interpretative disputes about several specific claims that are quite important to Kant's theory of moral motivation. The term "moral psychology" may be misleading here given the special sense of "morality" in Kant. The topic is practical psychology, an account of rational agency in general, not just as it relates to morality. But the term "practical psychology" is also misleading since Kant often equates the "practical" (which he often opposes to the "pragmatic") with the "moral". For recent discussions in English of such terminological issues, see Frierson, esp. ch. 3; Wood, "Kant and the Problem of Human Nature" (in this volume), Robert Louden, *Kant's Impure Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Prior to Kant, Christian Wolff had proposed a detailed account of “universal practical philosophy”, a general science of free action which precedes moral philosophy. As Alexander Baumgarten explained in the textbook Kant used in his lectures on moral philosophy, “Universal first practical philosophy is the first science of the remaining practical disciplines, since it contains the common principles of these several [disciplines].” Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Initia philosophiae practicae primae*, (Halle: Hemmerde, 1760), 1-91. Prolegomena §6. p. 3. Reprinted in *Kants Gesammelte Schriften* 19:10. See also Christian Wolff, *Der vernünftige Gedanken von der Menschen Thun und Lassen, zu Beförderung ihrer Glückseligkeit, den Liebhabern der Wahrheit (deutsche Ethik)*, (Frankfurt und Leipzig: Renger, 1733). Prolegomena §3. p. 2. Early in his philosophical career, Kant rejected the compatibilist moral psychology which undergirded the universal practical philosophy of Wolff and Baumgarten, but he never made replacing their discussions of “practical philosophy in general” into a focal point of his own writings or teachings on practical philosophy or anthropology. Yet, unsurprisingly, such topics were explored in the anthropology course which was, in part, a commentary upon Baumgarten’s empirical psychology.

¹³ Kant explicitly declared in the preface to the *Groundwork* that universal practical philosophy, at least as practiced by his predecessors, was unsuitable as a foundation for moral philosophy. [G 4:390-391] In his ethical treatises, Kant is interested primarily in morality and the role of the *a priori* in practical reason. This certainly requires that he discuss the pretensions of empirical practical reason to encroach on the territory of pure practical reason, but it never requires a comprehensive account of empirical practical reason itself. It is clear that Kant thinks that empirical practical reason is insufficient for morality, but that need not imply that the highest principles of empirical practical reason cannot be treated in a philosophical account of practical reason. After all, even in its empirical exercise, the will is a rational will. But in the introduction to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant does seem to go further and to suggest that empirical practical

reason has no place in practical philosophy. [MdS 6:217-8] The idea seems to be that, since technically practical reason is so heavily dependent upon theoretical reason (all of its a priori principles seem to be identified by theoretical reason), it is not a distinct kind of reason relying on a distinct set of a priori principles, while morally practical reason is quite distinctive. See also the preface and “First Introduction” to the *Critique of Judgement*, 5:172-173; 20:199-200. This seems to be an overstatement. Even if the “material” principles of prudential and instrumental reason are just generalizations from experience based upon the deployment of theoretical reason, the “foundations” of prudential and instrumental reason do not seem to be identified by theoretical reason. For example, the principle that finite rational agents ought to pursue the means to their ends, “The Hypothetical Imperative” as it has been called, which underlies particular hypothetical imperatives, does not seem to be itself a product of theoretical reason. Kant’s point seems to be primarily methodological and terminological. The classification based upon Kant’s epistemological concerns obscures the place for, but need not rule out a metaphysical investigation of free action in general.

¹⁴ For further elaboration of this suggestion, see Paul Guyer, “The Possibility of the Categorical Imperative,” *Philosophical Review* 104 (1995):353-385.

¹⁵ This should not be entirely surprising since, as Stark has noted, Kant typically taught both ethics and anthropology in the same semester and could expect some students to attend both courses, demanding a certain kind of coherence between the two courses. Stark, “Historical Notes and Interpretive Questions about Kant’s Lectures on Anthropology,” this volume.

¹⁶ “The faculty of a being to act in accordance with its representations is called *life*.” [MdS 6:211]

Sometimes in the lectures, Kant describes life in relation to desire, or laws of desire. cf. Busolt 25:1517; anon-Berlin ms. p. 121.

¹⁷ In the broadest sense, Kant explains, “desire” can cover such diverse intentional attitudes as inclinations, wishes, volitions, and passions. Kant’s discussion of affects and passions in the

Anthropology, discussed below, is much more sensitive and fine-grained than the apparently one-dimensional hedonism of the second *Critique*. Kant sometimes contrasts desire with purely rational motivation, yet in other places, he distinguishes between sensible desires and intellectual or rational desires which are not exclusively moral. [25:207; 579; 796; 1229] On ambiguities in our contemporary concept of desire, see T. M. Scanlon's idea of "desire in the attention-directed sense" in *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), [Hereafter *WWOEO*], p. 39; and Jean Hampton, *The Authority of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), [Hereafter, *TAR*] p. 92.

¹⁸ Generally, Kant maintains that, while non-human animals may have representations, they lack concepts and the ability to reflect upon their representations. Yet, the student notes on metaphysics known as "Metaphysics L₂" suggests that non-human animals can have *Willkür* but no *Wille*, primarily because they cannot form representations or form a reason (*Zweck*) for doing something they desire.[28:589] See also Allison, *KTF*, 269.

¹⁹ In one sense, we may consider the foregoing discussion as an empirically based analysis of behavior: classifying beings based upon what mental processes they seem to perform and which processes we suspect play a role in their behavior, e.g., whether they have concepts, whether they can employ rules, etc. The application of these concepts can be primarily empirically grounded. Yet the practical recommendations, both prudential and moral, seem to presuppose that the audience is composed of spontaneous beings. For more on this point, see Wood, "Kant and the Problem of Human Nature" (this volume) and *Kant's Ethical Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) [Hereafter, *KET*], pp. 206. This may seem inconsistent with critical distinctions between empirical and rational investigations and between the theoretical and practical uses of reason. For a brief discussion of some of these tensions, see Jacobs and Kain,

“Essays on Kant’s Anthropology” (this volume). My point here is simply that parts of the anthropology lectures do seem to presuppose genuine spontaneity. As Howard Caygill has pointed out in a different context, one virtue of this novel discipline is that it allows Kant the freedom to explore ideas in ways that do not immediately fit into pre-established disciplines. Caygill, “Kant’s Apology for Sensibility,” this volume.

²⁰ In the *Canon of the Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant did seem to employ a compatibilist conception of beings who have and behave in accord with “concepts”, but whose action is still completely causally determined. But when he explicitly insists later that, while such beings could behave in *accord* with their concepts, they could never truly act *from* their concepts, it is clear that he has in mind a capacity that cannot be empirically discerned. Cf. Karl Ameriks, “Kant and Hegel on Freedom: Two New Interpretations” *Inquiry* 35:219-232 (1992). [Hereafter, “KHF”]

²¹ It is worth noting that, in the earliest anthropology lectures, e.g., *Collins* and *Parow*, judgement has not yet been distinguished from understanding and reason. In his moral philosophy, Kant emphasizes the idea of an *interest (Interesse)*, a link between desire and pleasure which “the understanding judges to hold as a general rule (though only for the subject).”[MdS 6:212] The behavior of a non-human animal is said to be causally determined by its inclinations, without any intervening interest. While the causality may be exercised through that creature’s faculty of representation, judgment, in the form of an interest or in the rational inference from an interest, plays no role. Rules and judgment, mediate or immediate, seem to have no role to play in generating the behavior of such a being. Humans, in contrast, are said to possess a capacity for self-determination in accordance with their own concepts which is not causally determined by sensuous inclination. (In anthropological contexts, “interest” seems to lack this technical sense—it typically stands for “self-interest”.)

²² This, of course, raises a nest of thorny issues which we cannot resolve here concerning the consistency of Kant's accounts of empirical influence and transcendental freedom. For a helpful discussion of some of these issues, particularly as they bear on moral contexts, see Frierson.

²³ For an important recent discussion of Kant's theory of predispositions, capacities and inclinations and their relation to anthropology and character, see G. Felicitas Munzel, *Kant's Conception of Moral Character: The "Critical" Link of Morality, Anthropology, and Reflective Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). esp. chapters 2 and 3.

²⁴ It is worth noting that, in this context, "humanity" is the name for a predisposition or capacity possessed by some rational beings, but it does not pick out some unique property that is exemplified by all and only members of the kind "human being". In fact, as we will see, Kant believes that all rational beings (which he believed to include more than just human beings) have humanity and that there may be other, distinct properties that distinguish human beings from other kinds of being. Humanity, in this sense, is one element in Kant's account of what it is to be a human being, a kind of finite rational agent.

²⁵ It is worth noting that the conception of "human choice" found in *Metaphysics of Morals* seems to involve what *Religion* calls "personality" or the capacity to be determined to actions by pure will (i.e. positive freedom), yet "free will" seems to involve negative freedom, but not necessarily positive freedom. The first mention of 'free will' suggests both negative and positive freedom, the second mention, only the former. MdS 6:213-214. *Busolt* 25:1514, suggests a similar distinction between *Wille* (involving reason) and *Wollen* (involving inclination, which is not, however, identical with desire). It is important, however, to keep in mind that Kantian morality requires that there is an affection-independent source of motivation, not that all motivation is so independent.

²⁶ See *Busolt* 25:1486; KpV 5: 29; and the “Rostock” anthropology manuscript “H” 7:399. On the “Great Reversal,” see Karl Ameriks, *Kant’s Theory of Mind*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982/2000), ch. 6; “Kant on Spontaneity: Some New Data,” in *Proceedings of the VII International Kant-Kongress* (de Gruyter, 1991) p. 436-446, and “KHF”. Although I know of no direct evidence that Kant proposed an argument that derived absolute freedom from the recognition of prudential norms, it would be consistent with his position in the late 1770s and early 1780s and during this period such an argument is never subject to criticism. Compared to *Groundwork* III’s theoretical argument from the nature of judgment or of “pure thought,” such an argument might appear both redundant and less philosophically satisfying, but need not be reckoned illegitimate. After the “Great Reversal” in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, it might seem that Kant insists that spontaneity is required only for specifically *moral* agency. Although I cannot argue for this here, I believe that the reversal is really best seen as a change regarding the legitimate starting points for arguments for the presence of spontaneity: Kant comes to believe that the “fact of reason” is a good starting point, but the simple belief that we stand under prudential imperatives is not. On this interpretation of the “Great Reversal”, Kant would deny that our philosophical knowledge that we have the capacity to act prudentially could be independent of our knowledge that we have the capacity to act morally. Nonetheless, what is important is that this epistemic point entails neither that discussions of prudence must presuppose discussions of morality nor that the two capacities are metaphysically inseparable.

It is not completely clear why Kant adopted this epistemological position. For one hint, see TP 8:285n. Another reason for distinguishing morality and prudence *vis a vis* spontaneity is that a lack of spontaneity may seem to undermine morality more than prudence. Our well-being would still be real and valuable to us whether we acquired it freely or not; but moral worth is only real if we are autonomous... if we are not genuinely spontaneous, the concept of moral value would be a

chimera, a mere “cobweb of the brain”. Following Ameriks, we may still wonder, from a contemporary perspective, whether true spontaneity or transcendental freedom is as essential to any of the capacities of practical reason as Kant comes to think they are.

²⁷ More generally, in his discussions of the cognitive capacities of human beings, Kant suggests that the presence of concepts, and more particularly the “I” in our thought already distinguishes us from other animals.

²⁸ There are obvious and interesting differences between the *Religion*’s animality and the *Anthropology*’s technical predisposition, but this would take us too far afield. See Reinhard Brandt, *Kritischer Kommentar zu Kants Anthropology in pragmatischer Hinsicht (1798)*, vol. 10 of *Kant-Forschungen* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1999) p. 474.

²⁹ Schwaiger notes that the term “imperative” does not appear in the 1798 *Anthropology* or the extant *Nachschriften* from the anthropology lectures, though it does occur in a few places in the anthropology *Nachlaß* and once in the Rostock manuscript “H” of the 1798 *Anthropology*. Clemens Schwaiger, *Kategorische und andere Imperative: zur Entwicklung von Kants praktischer Philosophie bis 1785* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1999). [Hereafter, *KAI*], pp. 113-114. It is also worth noting that the use of “ought” which is definitive of imperatives is found throughout the anthropology materials in obviously non-categorical senses. For one example of the non-moral use of “ought” in anthropological contexts, see the Rostock manuscript.[7:413]

³⁰ I do not mean to deny that there are significant changes in Kant’s conception of these matters over time, but simply to suggest that every variation in terminology and usage need not reflect such a shift. Schwaiger has undertaken an extensive study of such two-, three-, and four way

distinctions throughout the course of Kant's development. See esp. Schwaiger, *KAI* pp. 129-130; 137; 172-183.

³¹ As Schwaiger has noted, sometimes Kant, following Baumgarten, identifies the task of determining the end with "wisdom" (though not necessarily in a moral sense) and the task of choosing appropriate means to it with "prudence".[25:779] see Schwaiger, *KAI*, p. 127.

Schwaiger also argues that in the *Groundwork* and after, Kant abandons the idea that prudence concerns both ends and means. *KAI*, pp. 184-186. I am not convinced that this duality entirely disappears. Given the pervasiveness of the transformations triggered by life in society (discussed below at the conclusion of section III), it is unsurprising that the distinction between the conception of the end and the means to it becomes blurred. But, as this passage from the *Religion* suggests, Kant still continues to employ the distinction in late sources. See also "Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius" 27:500 where he distinguishes between several "ways" of being happy and the "means" to them.

³² A survey of the anthropology lectures and the broader Kantian corpus reveals much ambiguity and fluidity surrounding the conception of happiness. Sometimes Kant suggests that happiness is just the satisfaction of *all* of our inclinations or a state of complete satisfaction. 25:413, KrV A806/B834, G 4:399, KU 5:434n. In *Friedländer*, however, Kant suggests that happiness is not a straightforward sum. [25:561-562, 572] In *Menschenkunde*, Kant suggested that we can form no genuine concept of happiness as a mere amalgamation of pleasures. Yet he simultaneously suggested that we can conceive of happiness in a negative way.[25:1081] In any event, even *Menschenkunde*, it is clear that happiness or well-being continues to ground prudential advice. See for example 25:1089. For a discussion of some changes and developments in Kant's conception of happiness, esp. the growing importance of pain in the lectures of the late 1770s and

early 1780s, see Susan Shell, “Kant’s ‘True Economy of Human Nature’: Rousseau, Count Verri, and the Problem of Happiness,” in this volume. There are also a number of familiar ambiguities in Kant’s conception of happiness and his claims that happiness is a “wavering concept,” that, in part because of the way our mind generates the idea, we change our mind about its content very often. KU 5:430, cf. discussion of the “fluctuating idea” or “ideal of imagination” G 4:399; 418 and *Menschenkunde* 25:1081. Although I cannot argue for the claim here, I believe that these claims should be interpreted primarily as another epistemic barrier, rather than as an additional source of ontological indeterminacy. For further discussion of the conception of happiness, see my “A Preliminary Defense of Kantian Prudence,” *Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung: Akten des IX. Internationalen Kant-Kongresses (Proceedings of the IX. International Kant Congress)* ed. Volker Gerhardt, Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Ralph Schumacher (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001). Volume III, pp. 239-246. See also Victoria Wike, *Kant on Happiness in Ethics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994.)

³³ R 6:51; KpV 5:84;118.

³⁴ KpV 5:25;36; MdS 6:215.

³⁵ G 4:399; KpV 5:25;61;118; MdS 6:215-216;409.

³⁶ G 4:399; KpV 5:61.

³⁷ KpV 5:25;118.

³⁸ KU 5:430.

³⁹ R 6:58. (according to the second edition) cf. Friedländer590-591.

⁴⁰ There is, of course, significant disagreement in the literature about whether it is reason or feeling or desire that would be doing the work here, and if it is reason, whether it is genuinely *practical* reason. See Korsgaard, “AKSV”, p. 487n; and “Skepticism about Practical Reason,” *Journal of Philosophy* 83:5-25 (1986). See also Hannah Ginsborg, “Korsgaard on Choosing Nonmoral Ends,” *Ethics* 109:5-21 (1998), p. 16. It certainly is not a matter of *pure* practical reason, and most of the principles employed will not be *a priori*. But as we will see Kant suggest, it is not simply a matter of mechanically weighing a single phenomenological factor or passively observing a causal interaction amongst incentives. Moreover, the demand for maximality in the idea of happiness is a product of the understanding, not sensibility.

⁴¹ Kant thinks it also precludes the possibility that there could be a universal “system” of happiness apart from morality. [KrV A811/B839]

⁴² For the importance of Count Verri’s influence on this point, see Shell, this volume and Brandt and Stark’s “Einleitung” to the lectures, pp. xli-xlvi.

⁴³ cf. KpV 5:36; MdS 6:216.

⁴⁴ See Kant’s treatment of the emotions and passions, discussed further below.

⁴⁵ Such suggestions reveal a conception of happiness that is more than a simple sum of pleasures or the satisfaction of our “strongest” inclinations. On its own, the intensity and persistence of a desire may not give us a reason to act (or not act) on it, but intensity and persistence may be among the factors (though not even uniformly positive factors) that we use in determining how to reconcile and integrate competing desires and determine what our happiness consists in. On Kant’s conception, this in turn only guides action (or gives us a reason to act) to the extent that happiness is an end that we do (or must) have. For more on this last point, see section IV, below.

⁴⁶ See also Manfred Kuehn's discussion of character, maxims and prudence in his magisterial *Kant: a Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 144-151.

⁴⁷ For example, Kant draws connections between character and the good will, though the precise nature of these connections is difficult to make out. Frierson has argued persuasively for the moral relevance and explicit moral intentions of Kant's pragmatic anthropology in chapter 3 of his dissertation.

⁴⁸ There is of course, also significant discussion in the *Anthropology and Religion* of the tension between "personality" and "humanity" or between the tasks of civilization and moralization, but that does not change the present point.

⁴⁹ Kant does not insist that all feelings and desires disable us in this way. And in the ordinary sense, we might object that many "emotions" and "passions" need not do so either. As Kant uses the terms, emotions and passions are species of feelings and desires, respectively, which do disable us. He would also be likely to claim that emotions and passions, in the broader sense, may disable us more than we are willing to admit.

⁵⁰ Kant explicitly discusses this contrast with Hume in the *Menschenkunde* notes. [25: 1120] Compare with the assessment of instinct and the discussion of "misology" in the *Groundwork*.

⁵¹ Of course Kant also makes the case that the affects and passion are contrary to virtue or good character. The point is that these arguments are clearly distinguishable. Frierson has emphasized to me in correspondence that in anthropological contexts, Kant seems to emphasize the problems the affects and passion cause for the pursuit of happiness, while in the ethics lectures and *Metaphysics of Morals* he emphasizes the obstacle they pose for morality. See also Frierson, chapter 3.

⁵² Kant does seem to think that the predispositions to “humanity” and “personality” of the *Religion* share a set of necessary conditions involving free agency. But, at least by the mid-1780s, Kant insists that personality requires an additional condition, namely autonomy or the susceptibility to the influence of pure practical reason. It is worth noting that even if the sufficient conditions for humanity and personality were identical, that would not imply the source thesis identified above (that moral norms and value are the source of prudential norms and value). It would only imply the weaker thesis that the same agents are subject to the demands of both.

⁵³ It is worth noting that under this conception of non-personal humanity, Kant seems to see reason as “representing maxims as suited to universal legislation”, i.e. with the pretensions of “self-conceit”. What is lacking is only the capacity to be motivated by pure practical reason. But Kant’s discussion of self-love at R 6:45n. does leave the possibility of non-conceited rational self-love open. See also KU 5:449.

⁵⁴ On “motivational independence,” see Allison, *KTF*, pp. 97ff.

⁵⁵ I thank Eric Watkins for pressing me for greater clarity on this and several other points.

⁵⁶ Strictly speaking, when it comes to the historical development of predispositions, this argument leaves Kant free to claim that those who have not yet developed (or in fact never will develop) their moral personality may have moral obligations, but it does commit him to the claim that beings lacking this predisposition would be without moral obligations.

⁵⁷ Rousseau seemed to fear that this was a direct result of leaving the “state of nature.” It is worth noting that, at certain points in his career (esp. in the late 1760s and into the mid-1770s), Kant explored the possibility that morality could serve as a “fixed point” or stabilizing element for a conception of happiness or well-being, as the anchor for a rational system of universal happiness.

See, for example, Paul Guyer, “Freedom as the Inner Value of the World,” in *Kant on Freedom, Law, and Happiness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) [Hereafter, *KFLH*] and Dieter Henrich, “The Moral Image of the World” in *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992). The focus of these reflections seems to be on morality as a means to a stable *universal* system of happiness, i.e., the happiness of all, not necessarily as a means to the more limited, perhaps thereby less “philosophically” interesting, prudential goal of the happiness of an individual agent.

⁵⁸ This shift also facilitates a tighter parallelism between technical, pragmatic, and moral predispositions on the one hand and the tasks of cultivation, civilization, and moralization on the other, which can be found in the 1798 *Anthropology* and the later lecture notes.

⁵⁹ Again, it is natural that pragmatic anthropological lectures to students on the topic of character and action upon principle would include reminders about the value of good character, the good will and specifically moral principles, for example, *Mrongovius* 25:1384-1392.

⁶⁰ G 4:416n. “Private prudence” is narrower in one sense, in virtue of its narrower object individual “advantage” or well-being; yet broader in another, it is concerned with a larger set of potential means, not simply the use of other *people*. The *Religion*’s [6:45n] conception seems rather broad, even if not under the name of prudence (which is quite sparse in the *Religion* anyhow). “Moral *Mrongovius* II” is ambiguous on this point.

⁶¹ Schwaiger, *KAI*, p. 127, correcting earlier work by Hinske.

⁶² It is worth noting, as Kant himself sometimes does, that the overall well-being or satisfaction of a *moral* being will ultimately need to involve the special satisfaction that can be found only in morally worthy action. For this suggestion, see *MdS* 6:387-388, *Friedländer* 25:560, and Guyer “FIVW,” section II. If, as a consequence, prudence is taken to demand action out of respect for

the moral law, this would be a reflection of the coexistence of “humanity” and “personality” in us, but would not be evidence that the authority of prudence presupposed the authority of moral norms, nor evidence for the source thesis. In any event, this does not seem to be a thought pursued in much detail in the anthropology lectures.

⁶³ As the anthropology course and the historical essays and *Critique of Judgement* suggest, in this way, prudence can serve a moral purpose in history, regardless of the moral intentions of particular individuals.

⁶⁴ The idea, in contemporary terminology, is that prudential reasons function, not as mere *prima facie* or “candidate” reasons, but as *pro tanto*, though not necessarily decisive reasons. On this distinction, see Shelly Kagan, *The Limits of Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). p. 17. Scanlon, WWOEO, pp. 50-51; S.L. Hurley, *Natural Reasons: Personality and Polity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989). pp. 130ff.; Kurt Baier, *The Rational and the Moral Order: The Social Roots of Reason and Morality* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995). pp. 58ff; and Hampton, *TAR*, p. 51-52.

⁶⁵ Wood, *KET*, p. 365. Wood argues that there can be no such grounds, and that, as a result, humanity and personality must be coextensive.

⁶⁶ G 4:418; KpV 5:37; R 6:125. In Kant, wishing is not mere desiring, because it presupposes an interest or act of incorporation, yet wishing does not entail willing or attempting to produce the object.

⁶⁷ Some translations obscure Kant’s claim that finite rational agents necessarily *will* happiness. For example, at MdS 6:386 Kant uses the verb *wollen*, but Mary Gregor renders this as “want” rather than “will”. Of course, in colloquial German, *wollen* can mean either, the question is

whether in this context Kant is (or should be) using it in a technical way, which he seems to be. In any event, Kant's references to happiness as a necessary end, while perhaps puzzling, are not ambiguous. It may seem that the very idea of a necessary end is inconsistent with Kant's conception of an end as an object of free choice. I have attempted to address part of this problem elsewhere. See my "A Preliminary Defense of Kantian Prudence."

⁶⁸ This task seems to be connected with reason's general demand for totality, in this case a totality of our ends, **mentioned in n. 40**. As Felicitas Munzel has suggested in correspondence, in the *Anthropology*, Kant derives his definition of the class of humans, not from a conception of pure rationality nor directly from nature, but from the consideration of rational beings *in relation to* nature [7:321], further supporting the idea that the proper use of reason for humans is directed toward our relations in that natural system.

⁶⁹ Korsgaard has argued that the underlying normative principle must presuppose a distinction between what a person's end is and the means he employs, a distinction she thinks could only be based upon a further, unconditional normative principle. "NIR" pp. 220, 250, 252. This would seem to imply the source thesis and undermine the normative independence of prudence. While Korsgaard's analysis of why Hume cannot draw the necessary distinction is persuasive (p. 230), I follow Jean Hampton in being unconvinced that only an unconditional normative principle (i.e. the categorical imperative) could ground the distinction. Hampton agreed that an instrumental principle can only function in the context of an end, and since there is dispute about what it takes for a preference to attain that status, settling this issue involves taking a further normative stance. But she argued that this stance need not specify the content of the end; picking out its structural features may be sufficient, and need not distinguish between the ends an agent *ought* to have and the end she happens to have. *TAR*, ch. 5.

⁷⁰ For a recent discussion of this issue, though with a different understanding of prudence, see David O. Brink, “Kantian Rationalism: Inescapability, Authority, and Supremacy,” in *Ethics and Practical Reason*, ed. Garrett Cullity and Berys Gaut (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997.) pp. 255-291.

⁷¹ TP 8:278. Kant insists that we can “abstract” from our prudential end if morality requires this of us, but we can never “renounce” it. For a similar point, see “Metaphysik der Sitten Vigilantius” 27:487. On the notion of “obligatory ends”, see MdS 6:382ff.

⁷² Exactly how these norms are related is a difficult matter. Korsgaard has suggested that both moral and prudential norms may be grounded in a rational agent’s need for “volitional unity”. “Self-Constitution in the Ethics of Plato and Kant,” *Journal of Ethics* 3(1999): 1-29. Perhaps such a common context could provide the basis for an argument for morality’s supremacy.

⁷³ Kant’s own resolution of such conflicts is manifested in his account of the “highest good,” which relies upon his moral religion, the postulation of the existence of God. KpV 5:124ff. For a still useful discussion of this issue, see Wood, *KMR*. I should note that none of the foregoing is intended to deny that there may also be a special kind of reason for moral agents to promote the happiness or well-being of other moral agents. The point is that such a special kind of reason does not itself ground, and may in fact presuppose ordinary prudential normativity.

⁷⁴ Wood, *KET*, pp. 365-66, cf. 380. Again, it is still possible that the reasons that people typically act upon when they pursue their own happiness do involve claims of universality that can only be fulfilled by or in the context of moral reasons. See for example, Kant’s derivation of the formula of humanity and his discussions of “self-conceit” in the *Groundwork*, the second *Critique* and the *Religion*.

⁷⁵ R 6:26n. See also R7201 (19:275) and the discussion of the “fact of reason” in the second *Critique* 5:30-31.

⁷⁶ On the fundamental importance of the value of autonomy, see Paul Guyer, *KFLH*.

⁷⁷ I would like to thank Karl Ameriks, David Solomon, Felicitas Munzel, Eric Watkins, Patrick Frierson, Brian Jacobs and my colleagues at Purdue University for helpful comments on earlier versions of this essay.