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NATURAL TELEOLOGY AND KANT'S DUTIES TO ONESELF AS AN ANIMAL BEING

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2020

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant appears to claim that there is a category of duties to oneself, known as the duties to oneself as animal beings, that is based in the natural teleology of the natural appetites (self-love, the desire for sex, and the desire for food). Commentators, rightly puzzled by these claims, have said that any appeal to natural teleology would be inconsistent with Kant's account of the ground of the moral law, and also with Kant's understanding of human beings as autonomous. As such, the duties to oneself as an animal being are typically given some sort of non-teleological explanation. I claim that such an explanation leads to conceptual and interpretive difficulties. In this dissertation I defend a teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. I begin by explaining the duties to oneself as an animal being in the context of Kant's moral psychology and his account of human nature. The duties to oneself as an animal being are properly understood as limiting one's actions only in cases where one acts to satisfy a natural appetite. Kant's understanding of natural appetite satisfaction, moreover, is teleological from the outset. The feeling of pleasure and displeasure, according to Kant, just is an awareness of some condition as agreeing or disagreeing with one's life. Because natural appetite satisfaction is teleological from the beginning, Kant's appeal to natural teleology in the account of the duties to oneself as an animal being does not involve the introduction of some external or heteronomous commitment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the generous help and support of many people. I would like to take the time to personally thank those who were crucial to helping me articulate, develop, and succeed in finishing this project.

First, I would like to thank my advisor, David Sussman, for painstakingly reviewing so many of my drafts and for so many wonderful and insightful conversations throughout the writing process. Your comments and objections challenged me not only to strengthen my arguments but to become a better philosopher, and your patience in taking the time to discuss and explain your concerns with me did not go unnoticed.

Next, I would like to thank Helga Varden for her excellent and incredibly prompt feedback. It was in your seminar on Kant's practical philosophy that I first became aware of Kant's practical philosophy as it appears outside of the *Groundwork*, including the puzzle concerning natural teleology in the duties to oneself that this project concerns. I am also grateful to have worked on this project while you were writing your book that covers many of the same issues, despite us often reaching different conclusions.

I am also thankful to the other members of my committee, Colleen Murphy and Kirk Sanders, for their helpful questions and feedback. I appreciate your enthusiasm for this project despite it dealing with issues of concern only to a handful of Kant scholars. I also want to thank Alexandra Newton for many helpful discussions about Kant, and the Third Critique in particular.

I also want to thank all the other members of the University of Illinois Philosophy Department, both faculty and graduate students, with whom I have had many helpful discussions.

I am also deeply indebted to the administrative staff in the Philosophy Department, who were always able to provide a quick answer to my many questions.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends for their support throughout this process. Thank you for believing in me and for kindly listening to me describe my project in more detail than you probably wanted to know. My deepest thanks go to my wife Miyuki for believing in me and for motivating me to finish this project. You make me a better person, and without your encouragement and support I would not have been able to finish this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION…………………………………………………………………………...1
CHAPTER 1: KANT'S MORAL PSYCHOLOGY………………………………………………7
CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL NATURE AND MORAL SELF-PRESERVATION…………………25
CHAPTER 3: ENJOYMENT, PAIN, AND ANIMAL NATURE………………………………80
CONCLUSION……………………………………………………………………………136
BIBLIOGRAPHY…………………………………………………………………………138

INTRODUCTION

When one thinks of moral philosophers who offer a compelling account of non-rational animals, and in particular the value of animals, Kant's name is probably not one that comes up, except perhaps as a point of comparison. Kant's account of our obligation to animals is infamous for its anthropocentric rendering of our obligations to animals as duties to ourselves. Such an account seems to be part and parcel of a Kantian theory of morality, which emphasizes the importance of our capacity for stepping back and engaging in self-conscious reflection. Those sympathetic to Kant's practical philosophy are often taken to task on this point, and must find some way of defending Kant's view about our duties to animals in light of the common thought that inflicting unnecessary harm upon animals is to wrong the animal.[1] There is a deeper worry here than just the concern that Kant misunderstood the nature of our obligation to animals. The deeper concern is that Kant's theory of morality views the ideal moral agent as hyper-reflective and fundamentally disengaged from the world in problematic ways. Here I have in mind Bernard Williams famous one-thought-too-many objection.[2] The picture of rational agents as fundamentally reflective in this way can make it seem difficult to understand the importance of things like pleasure, joy, happiness, and the importance of our own animal nature. Korsgaard, for example, writes that we relate to our animal nature as something that is "optional," given the

[1] Helga Varden gives a nice response to these worries in her paper "Kant and Moral Responsibility for Animals," in *Kant on Animals*, eds. Lucy Allais and John Callanan (forthcoming). Varden's argument is that although we cannot *morally* value animals, we can value them in other ways, namely, through our basic desire for non-rational interaction with other beings. This desire, which Kant calls the desire for community with other beings, is a part of our basic predisposition to the good.

[2] Bernard Williams, "Character and Morality," in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 197–216.

supreme importance of our rational nature.[3] The strength of Kant's account of moral value has the effect of making all other forms of value seem insignificant in comparison.

In fact, it may be even worse than this. Kant often suggests that our animal nature is not only something toward which a rational agent is ambivalent toward, but something which we regard with scorn and disdain. Kant writes in the second Critique that the inclinations "are always *burdensome* to a rational being" since we understand their insignificance compared to the moral law, and therefore we "wish to be freed from them" (5:118).[4] Similarly, in the *Groundwork* Kant remarks that it is the "universal wish of every rational being to be altogether free from them [inclinations]" (4:428). And in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant writes that the "Impulses of nature, accordingly, involve *obstacles* within the human being's mind to his fulfillment of duty … which he must judge that he is capable of resisting and conquering by reason" (6:380). While this suggests that our attitude toward the inclinations is one of outright hostility, we should be cautious to accept this conclusion. After all, it would seem that inclinations and our animal nature in general could only serve as temptations for a rational being

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[3] Christine Korsgaard, *Self-Constitution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 23.

[4] References to Kant's works are to the Academy edition volume number and pagination and will be cited in text. References to the *Groundwork*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Metaphysics of Morals* are to *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). References to Kant's *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* are to *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Religion and Rational Theology*, eds. and trans. Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). References to *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, and *Lectures on Pedagogy* are to *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Anthropology, History, and Education* eds. and trans. Robert B. Louden and Günter Zöller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Ethics*, eds. Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind, trans. Peter Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: The Critique of Pure Reason*, eds. and trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: Lectures on Anthropology*, eds. Allen W. Wood and Robert B. Louden, trans. Robert R. Lewis, Robert B. Louden, G. Felicitas Munzel, and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

if there is already something rational, or at least something offering the appearance of rationality, in those inclinations to begin with.

As it turns out, Kant's view is more complicated than the preceding remarks about the inclinations might lead one to believe. Despite the above characterization of the impulses of nature as obstacles to moral conduct, Kant goes on in the very same work to identify some impulses of nature as teleologically related to morality:

> There are impulses of nature having to do with man's animality. Through them nature aims at a) his self-preservation, b) the preservation of the species, and c) the preservation of the capacity to enjoy life, though still on the animal level only. – The vices that are here opposed to his duty to himself are *murdering himself*, the unnatural use of his sexual inclination, and such excessive consumption of food and drink as weakens his capacity for making purposive use of his powers. (6:420)

That Kant thinks there are duties to oneself as an animal being is surprising. Even more surprising, however, is his characterization of these duties as rooted in natural teleology. The impulses of nature, or natural appetites, have natural aims that are not to be violated. Kant thus appears to hold that we in fact have a duty to preserve our animal nature, and that this obligation is due to the apparent authority of our natural appetites.

In this work I will defend Kant's account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. Though there are many interpretations of Kant's account of the duties to oneself as an animal being, I am aware of none that defend this account as thoroughly teleological.[5] The advantage of this strategy is that it highlights both the moral and the non-moral importance of animal nature for human beings. My approach is informed by interpretation of Kant's moral philosophy that

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[5] For example, Lara Denis, "Kant's Ethics and Duties to Oneself," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 78, no. 4 (1997); Mark Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," in *Kant's "Tugendlehre,"* ed. Andreas Trampota, Oliver Sensen, and Jens Timmerman (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2013); Oliver Sensen, "Duties to Oneself," in *The Palgrave Kant Handbook*, ed. Matthew C. Altman (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Jens Timmerman "Kantian Duties to the Self, Explained and Defended" *Philosophy*, 81, no. 3 (2006). I will discuss these accounts in greater detail in chapter 2.

foreground the role of anthropology as a philosophical account of human nature, as in the work of Allen Wood and Robert Louden, and in particular David Sussman and Helga Varden.

I discuss Kant's moral psychology in chapter 1. My goal in chapter 1 is to explain the features of Kant's moral psychology that are relevant to my analysis of the duties to oneself as an animal being in the proceeding chapters. I begin with a discussion of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure and the faculty of desire more broadly. I then discuss a puzzle concerning the relation between action and inclination in rational beings, namely, in what way can a rational being be said to act from an inclination? Finally, I consider the relation between duties to oneself, happiness, and perfection. Despite Kant's criticism of the doctrine of perfectionism as too vague to provide commands that specify how one should act, I claim that there is a role for perfection in moral theory, provided that it is possible to specify the nature of the subject of obligation. Duties to oneself as an animal being meet this requirement since they are duties concerning one's animal nature.

In chapter 2 I introduce the teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. I begin by examining a general puzzle concerning the possibility of duties to oneself. The puzzle is to understand how it is possible to be subject to a command that one gives to oneself. Then I explain the predominate view of the duties to oneself as an animal being in the scholarly literature. According to this view, we have duties to ourselves in virtue of our animality because of the dependence of our rational capacities upon our animal nature. I argue that this view gives rise to conceptual and interpretive problems since it fails to properly account for these duties *as* duties concerning one's animal nature. That is, this view attributes a conceptual confusion to Kant insofar as it represents duties to oneself as an animal being as falling under a general obligation to one's rational nature, rather than Kant's explication of this duty as involving three

particular actions. Moreover, this view simply ignores Kant's explicit characterization of these duties as teleological. I then proceed to motivate the teleological account of these duties. I explain Kant's characterization of animality as part of a predisposition to the good in human nature and explain Kant's account of the propensity to evil. Then I present an account of the vices that are instantiated in the violation of the duties to oneself as an animal being. I finish by asking what, if anything, Kant's account of these vices has to say about human virtue. I conclude that avoiding these vices promotes our moral health, understood as undoing some of the self-deception that is inherent in the way that human beings acquire the propensity to evil.

With this account of the duties to oneself and some important details about human nature available, I proceed in chapter 3 to explain how Kant's appeal to natural teleology is compatible with human freedom and autonomy. I begin by explaining the role of teleology within Kant's philosophy. I focus especially on his argument for why we must understand organisms teleologically. Kant's primary claim is that we cannot understand the organism as a unity without teleological laws; that is, without presupposing that organisms have a purpose or end. This does not require thinking that organisms are the product of a designer, since Kant identifies organisms as *natural* ends. The purpose of the organism is to preserve itself as individual and as species. Then I return to a consideration of the duties to oneself as an animal being. I argue that the justification for Kant's appeal to natural teleology has to do with his understanding of pleasure and displeasure as themselves teleologically structured feelings. The duties to oneself as an animal being restrict the manner in which one may satisfy the natural appetites by requiring that their satisfaction is compatible with the respective natural purposes. There is nothing especially problematic, however, about restricting the pursuit of natural appetite satisfaction to natural teleology if pleasure and displeasure already contain an internal teleology. That is, when one

seeks to satisfy a natural appetite, one already maintains a commitment to natural teleology. In the context of the duties to oneself as an animal being, Kant's appeal to natural teleology does not amount to an appeal to something external, or something that would amount to a violation of a rational being's freedom or autonomy. I finish chapter 3 by considering some objections to my view.

CHAPTER 1: KANT'S MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

In the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant claims there are two kinds of duties to oneself: duties to oneself as an animal being and duties to oneself as a moral being. Quite surprisingly, Kant characterizes the duties to oneself as an animal being as teleological. This is surprising because Kant also holds that we are essentially free, rational beings, and it is in virtue of our rational nature that we possess a special kind of value (dignity). I will argue that, in contrast to the predominant understanding of duties to oneself as an animal being in the literature, duties to oneself as an animal being should be understood teleologically (chapter 2), and that despite appearances, the appeal to natural teleology is not at odds with our autonomy (chapter 3). Crucial to both claims is the idea that the duties to oneself have to do with the regulation of actions that proceed from the satisfaction of our natural (animal) appetites. Before proceeding with these arguments, some key concepts must be clarified. In particular, I need to give an account of the host of concepts that have to do with action and motivation, such as desire, appetite, inclination, pleasure, happiness, and perfection. Because I claim that the duties to oneself as an animal being are integral to natural appetite satisfaction, I will need to defend the view that human beings *can* in fact be motivated by a natural appetite.

I will begin by discussing the feeling of pleasure and displeasure and the faculty of desire. Then I will explain how a rational being can be motivated by a natural appetite. I will finish with a discussion of the relation between duties to oneself as an animal being and the highest good. Though the duties to oneself as an animal being are related to happiness, insofar as they identify acceptable ways of satisfying an appetite, I conclude that the duties to oneself are more closely related to perfection than happiness.

I. The Feeling of Pleasure and displeasure

According to Kant the mind has three basic faculties (*Vermögen*): the faculty of knowledge, the faculty of desire, and the faculty of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure (5:177). Unlike the role of sensation in cognition, which is objective, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure is subjective (6:211-2). But Kant holds that these feelings are not just brute ways of being affected. Rather, pleasure and displeasure represent an action or an object *as* being a certain way—namely, as the promotion or hindrance of one's life (7:231). Pleasure and displeasure are teleological in that they represent something as good or bad for one's life.[6] Kant distinguishes three forms of feeling pleasure and displeasure on the basis of the objects that give rise to pleasure and displeasure. An agreeable object "pleases the senses in sensation" (5:205). Thus, the pleasure in the agreeable is something that only holds for an individual. That I get pleasure from eating a melon or watching a movie is not grounds for assuming that others will also get pleasure from the same activities. Some might find the melon too sweet, or they might not enjoy the texture. The agreeable is not merely something that one approves of in some detached manner. Rather, the agreeable is something that awakens inclination. We take an interest in tee agreeable, and we regard the agreeable as good because it "gratifies" (5:207). Kant identifies the specific feeling of pleasure and displeasure from the agreeable and disagreeable as enjoyment and pain (7:231; 5:207).

The beautiful pleases on the basis of a specific relation between a sensation and the imagination (5:203). Kant calls these judgments of taste (5:209). Such judgments are not cognitive, which is to say that judging something to be beautiful is not a matter of recognizing

[6] Of course, these feelings are not guaranteed to be accurate. Just as we are subject to systematic illusion in the case of vision, our feeling of pleasure and displeasure may not always be accurate with what it represents as promoting or hindering life. In the *Lectures on Anthropology*, Kant gives the example of opium, which "at first seems to promote life since it makes the blood very liquid and thin, such that it can spread through the veins fast, but ultimately it has sad consequences" (25:768).

that some object falls under a concept. At the same time, judgments of taste are not dependent on the way a subject is affected by the object merely in sensation, as in the case of the agreeable. That is, pleasure in the beautiful is not due to any prior interest one may or may not have (5:205). As such, judgments of beauty are universal. When I judge something to be beautiful, I do not maintain that this judgment is valid only for myself. Instead, I expect that others should agree with my judgment (5:213). The difficulty is to understand how a judgment of taste can aspire to universality without recourse to concepts. Kant's solution is that pleasure in the beautiful is "consciousness of the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers [the imagination and the understanding] of the subject" (5:222).

The final form of pleasure is pleasure in the good. Unlike the agreeable and the beautiful, the good is pleasing "by means of reason alone, through the mere concept" (5:207). The good can be good for something, or it can be good in itself. Like the agreeable, judgments about the good are interested. That is, judgments of the good are cognitive judgments (5:207). Thus, one might judge wood to be good for the purpose of building a house, and loose sand to be bad for such a purpose. A good will, on the other hand, can be judged to be good in itself.

II. The Faculty of Desire

Kant defines the faculty of desire (*Begehrensvermögen*) as "the faculty to be, by means of one's representations, the cause of the objects of those representations" (6:211). For example, if one is thinking about a cup of coffee, for example, how it smells, tastes, that it is warm, and that it has caffeine, the faculty of desire is the power to bring about the object of one's representation; namely, a cup of coffee. Kant defines life as "the faculty of a being to act in accordance with its representations," and desire is a way for a being to act in accordance with its representations (6:211). Desire and aversion are always connected with pleasure and displeasure,

since it is on the basis of how some object makes one feel (pleasant or unpleasant) that one has a desire or aversion (6:211). I desire coffee because it is pleasant. That is, because in my present state I am cold and tired, I judge that coffee will be enjoyable to me (in a way that it might not be if I am hot and dehydrated), a judgment that is based on previous experience. In this way, pleasure and displeasure cause desire and aversion. While desire and aversion are always connected with pleasure and displeasure, it is not the case that pleasure and displeasure are always connected with desire and aversion (6:211). This is because, as discussed above, Kant maintains that aesthetic pleasure is disinterested, which means that the feeling of pleasure from the beautiful is independent of whether one has a prior desire for it.

Practical philosophy concerns itself with what Kant calls "desire in the narrow sense," which is when a desire is caused by feeling (6:212). Habitual desire, such as the desire to have coffee every morning, is called inclination. The basis of this inclination may be that in the morning one is tired and cold, and that hot coffee almost always helps wake one up. The general rule that coffee is pleasant in the morning is an interest (6:212).

The faculty of desire in relation to action is choice (*Willkür*). Choice that can only be determined by inclination or sensible impulse is "animal choice (*arbitrium brutum*)" (6:213). Free choice is choice that can be determined by pure reason. Human choice is a species of free choice, in that it is "affected but not determined by impulses" (6:213). Free choice has a positive aspect and a negative aspect. The negative aspect of free choice is the aforementioned lack of determination by sensible impulses. The positive aspect of free choice is "the ability of pure reason to be of itself practical" (6:214). The faculty of desire "in relation to the ground determining choice to action" is the will (*Wille*) (6:213). The will itself has no determining ground, "it is practical reason itself" (6:213).

Finally, an incentive (*Triebfeder*) is the subjective determining ground of the will in sensible creatures. Sensible creatures don't act in conformity to the moral law out of necessity. Rather they must do so through resistance to their inclinations. An incentive is the subjective determining ground of the will in sensible creatures, whether the incentive is pleasure, self-interest, or respect.

III. Action Motivated by Inclination—A Puzzle

Kant often speaks of inclinations or other aspects of our sensible nature as threats to virtue. Recall that in one such passage Kant writes that the "Impulses of nature, accordingly, involve *obstacles* within the human being's mind to his fulfillment of duty … which he must judge that he is capable of resisting and conquering by reason" (6:380). But how exactly do these impulses stand as obstacles to duty? Kant says that human beings are "affected but not determined" by such impulses, which suggests that impulses can be obstacles not through brute force but rather through an act of one's free choice. In the *Religion*, Kant claims that "the power of choice has the characteristic, entirely peculiar to it, that it cannot be determined to action through any incentive except so far as the human being has incorporated it into his maxim" (6:24). This claim is known as the incorporation thesis, and it is controversial because, as Tamar Schapiro puts it, the incorporation "tends to assimilate impulsive and unreflective actions to deliberate, reflective ones."[7]

My goal is not to settle the debate about the incorporation thesis. Instead, I will simply offer a suggestion for how one might act on a natural appetite. The problem is to understand the status of an appetite as something capable of affecting but not determining a rational being. If appetites are able to be incorporated into a rational being's maxim, this must be because they are

[7] Tamar Schapiro, "The Nature of Inclination," *Ethics* 119, no. 2 (2009): 229.

in some sense rational. But if the appetite is rational in this way, then it must be importantly different from whatever character it has in a nonrational animal. That is, something about the appetite is changed when it gets incorporated into the maxim of a rational being.

Schapiro claims that an appetite contains something normative, but that the normativity is not that of a reason. If it were, she claims, then thirst, for example, would represent something of the form: drink, because of this or that reason. Instead, she takes it that appetites should be understood as imperatives, so thirst simply represents the command: drink![8] It is unclear what Schapiro takes the difference between a reason and a command to be. Presumably a command is just an unconditional reason, and this seems to be the contrast she has in mind. Schaprio goes on to say that this this way of understanding an appetite works particularly well for explaining non-human animal motivation.[9] Animals have a "teleological consciousness" that organizes their world into the to-be-pursued and the to-be-avoided, and an upshot of this view allows us to understand how animals are governed by appetite without thereby thinking of their behavior simply as causal dispositions. This suggests that the real question has not yet been answered, since what is of interest is an account of how human beings relate to their appetites.[10] Note, however, that on Schapiro's account a natural appetite already has a rational characterization even at the level of the animal. In other words, basic animal appetites are themselves already proto-rational, which suggests that however they are changed when they are incorporated into a human being's maxim, this change is not the transformation of a brute causal force into

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[8] Schapiro, "The Nature of Inclination," 247.

[9] As Schapiro notes, her thinking here dovetails with Christine Korsgaard's work on animals. Christine Korsgaard, "Fellow Creatures: Kantian Ethics and Our Duties to Animals," in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values,* vol. 24, ed. Grethe B. Peterson (Salt Lake City: Utah University Press, 2004).

[10] The difference, Schapiro contends, is that while animals have only one evaluative outlook, human beings have two: "Our inclination addresses us as nonrational animals subject to the dictatorial authority of instinct. Our reason addresses us as free beings capable of autonomy. In this respect, they are two different motivational sources." Schapiro, "The Nature of Inclination," 254.

something rational. The worry seems to disappear if one abandons the picture of appetites as brute causal forces.

Whether appetites are brute causal forces is a difficult question. On the one hand, our own appetites do not seem to be brute causal forces. They may appear to be so from a third-personal perspective, but first-personally appetites are evaluative outlooks and not psychological facts about oneself. As Schapiro puts it, an appetite is not merely a dispositional fact about oneself, akin to, say, the fact that I sneeze when there is lots of pollen in the air. Rather, an appetite is something one can act on, something one can satisfy.[11] But perhaps this character of an appetite is due to the fact that this is just how appetites appear to rational creatures, and so it doesn't rule out the thought that appetites may yet be brute causal forces in animals. Of course, it's impossible for us to even begin to characterize what an appetite might be like for a non-rational animal, since even our best attempts may be hopelessly anthropocentric.

As discussed earlier, Kant understands pleasure and displeasure teleologically. Pleasure and displeasure are feelings of the promotion and hindrance of life. While there is debate about exactly how to unpack the cognitive aspect of these feelings, it's clear that Kant does not hold the view that an appetite is a brute causal force.[12] Instead, as feelings of the promotion or hindrance of life, Kant thinks of pleasure and displeasure, and the appetites by extension, as primitive judgments about one's state. While this doesn't settle the question of what these appetites are like for animals, it offers support for an account of animal appetites as sharing something in common with human appetites, insofar as the appetites are already rational.

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[11] Schapiro, "The Nature of Inclination," 247.

[12] For instance, see Janelle DeWitt, "Feeling and Inclination: Rationalizing the Animal Within," in *Kant and the Faculty of Feeling*, eds. Kelly Sorensen and Diane Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 67-87. See also Allen W. Wood, "Feeling and Desire in the Human Animal," in *Kant and the Faculty of Feeling*, 88-106.

IV. Happiness

In this section I will explain Kant's conception of happiness. But before I discuss happiness, I want to say something about Kant's account of non-moral motivation. Kant holds that in general there are only two possible motives a human being can have. Either one acts for the sake of the moral law, or one acts for the sake of pleasure. A practical principle is either a material practical principle or a formal practical principle (a practical law). A material practical principle is a practical principle that determines the will through pleasure. A formal practical principle is a practical principle that determines the will through the moral law. Kant notes two features of material practical principles. First, since they are empirical, they cannot be the basis of practical laws. Second, material practical principles are the only kind of non-moral principles that exist. Therefore, Kant is a hedonist about non-moral action; non-moral action is always based on a material practical principle, and such principles determine the will through pleasure. Theorem II in the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason states that: "All material practical principles as such are, without exception, of one and the same kind and come under the general principle of self-love or one's own happiness" (5:22).

This claim is puzzling for a few reasons. For one, it's surprising that Kant would accept a hedonistic account of non-moral practical reasoning. Of course, such an account is probably accurate for most non-moral actions, such as eating food or watching television. But this account also implies that one's true motive for being honorable, having friends or meeting professional obligations is nothing more than a desire for pleasure. And apart from aesthetic pleasure, Kant rejects the distinction between higher and lower pleasures (5:23). While there can be many different objects of desire, the only relevant feature of those objects is the pleasure one expects from them. Another puzzling aspect of this claim is that Kant seems to accept that one *can* have non-hedonic motives for performing non-moral actions. In his many discussions of honor, Kant

notices that the motive of honor occupies a special status. By acting for the sake of honor, one acts admirably, for example, by fighting in a duel in spite of the remonstrations of one's inclinations. While the motive of honor is certainly no substitute for the moral law, the motive of honor is still praiseworthy because it teaches people to see value outside the immediate sensations of pleasure and displeasure. This seems to contradict Kant's claim that all non-moral action is motivated by pleasure insofar as we take pleasure to be of the ordinary physical variety.

The issue of Kant's hedonism is a difficult problem regardless of how one feels about hedonism as a philosophical position. Kant seems to affirm a very crude hedonism about non-moral choice. But his comments on honor show that he seems to think it *is* possible to perform non-moral actions for the sake of non-hedonic motives. Strictly speaking, I think it's correct to say that Kant is a hedonist. That is, all non-moral choice is motivated by pleasure. But we needn't think that one's motive for being an honorable person or being a true friend is merely pleasure. Such actions should be thought of as quasi-moral instead of non-moral. The motive of honor is non-moral in the sense that one's motive is not the moral law, but quasi-moral in the sense that one's motive is not mere pleasure. The motive of honor contains something admirable, which is why we hold it in high regard. Kant is a hedonist about non-moral choice, but when Kant talks about non-moral choice, I claim that he's referring to choice that is strictly tied to feelings of pleasure and displeasure. Finally, to say that all such non-moral choice falls under self-love need not be taken to mean that one's motive or aim is merely for pleasure as such. Instead, Kant is simply distinguishing self-regarding action from moral action. Now onto Kant's view of happiness.

Kant says happiness is "a rational being's consciousness of the agreeableness of life uninterruptedly accompanying his whole existence" (5:22). Most of the time, Kant defines

happiness in terms of the satisfaction of our inclinations. In the *Groundwork*, for instance, happiness is the "sum of satisfaction of inclinations" (4:399).[13] Happiness for animals is quite simple, because animals only possess inclinations related to their natural appetites. Moreover, these inclinations are not in conflict with each other, at least not in principle. Human beings, however, have complicated desires, many of which are in conflict, or require great effort to keep from coming into conflict. Consider the case of a person who is deciding whether to move to a new place or to remain in the city she has lived her entire life in. She might have reasons for thinking that the new place will be good for her, but maybe she will discover that she can't stand being stuck in traffic for so long, or that she deeply misses her hometown and her friends. Kant writes, "the concept of happiness is such an indeterminate concept that, although every human being wishes to attain this, he can still never say determinately and confidently with himself what he really wishes and wills" (4:418).[14] Moreover, since happiness is "a maximum of well-being in my present condition and in every future condition," one must make predictions and guesses about what will be satisfying to one in the future (4:418). Hence, happiness is an ideal of imagination, not reason (4:418). If happiness were an ideal of reason, we'd be able to know a priori what would make us happy. But it's obvious that we can't know which career will be more rewarding, or which food will be most satisfying independent of experience. A further difficulty is that happiness for human beings is essentially comparative: "It is only in comparison with others that we regard ourselves happy or unhappy" (6:27). Happiness thus seems to be an inherently unstable ideal, involving not just the satisfaction of whatever desires one may possess, but also the desire for superiority.

[13] In the second Critique Kant defines happiness as the harmonization of inclinations (5:73).
[14] There is a similar remark in the second Critique: the principle of happiness "does not proscribe the very same practical rules to all rational beings, even though the rules come under a common heading, namely that of happiness" (5:36).

Though happiness is an ideal of the imagination, one can reason about how to achieve the most efficient means to one's happiness. Reasoning about one's happiness is prudential reasoning (4:416). Prudential reasons function as hypothetical imperatives, or imperatives that that serve as reasons provided that one has already adopted some end. This implies that one's happiness, like one's health, can only provide a reason for doing something if one takes an interest in it. But in the *Groundwork* Kant also claims that happiness is a unique kind of hypothetical imperative. Normal hypothetical imperatives apply only to those who have set some particular end. Happiness is a unique hypothetical imperative because it applies to everyone as a "natural necessity" (*Naturnotwendigkeit*) (4:415). This natural necessity creates a tension in rational beings who recognize the authority of the moral law. Kant goes on to claim that it is the "universal wish of every rational being to be altogether free from them [inclinations]" (4:428). Kant does not seem to have held on to this extremely harsh view of the inclinations, and in the *Religion* he writes that it would actually be blameworthy to try to eliminate one's inclinations (6:58).

Kant claims that happiness is an "indeterminate concept" which varies from person to person based on their "wishes and wills" (4:418). But happiness might contain some determinate elements if there are inclinations that do not depend on individual preferences but rather are necessary for all finite beings. In fact, in his argument against the claim that the true aim of reason is to secure happiness Kant thinks that happiness is interchangeable with "preservation" (*Erhaltung*) and "welfare" (*Wohlergehen*) (4:395). Although human happiness is indeed quite different from animal happiness both in terms of the inclinations that compose it and in the manner in which it is appreciated, happiness for human beings includes animal happiness as basic elements of human happiness. In what follows I want to examine the possibility that the

duties to oneself as an animal being are related to some sort of rational requirement to be happy, given the connection between the satisfaction of the natural appetites and at least the animal form of happiness. Reason allows one to distinguish between different senses of good and bad, in terms of immediate inclination satisfaction and in terms of what is good according to rational beings.

Along these lines, Kant notes the difference in German between *Gut* and *Böse* on the one hand, and *Wohl* and *Weh* on the other (5:59-60). *Gut* and *Böse* refer to what is truly good and what is truly bad. Something is *Gut* if it is the object of desire for "every reasonable human being," and *Böse* if there is universal aversion. *Gut* and *Böse* involve a reference to the faculty of desire, but since they are rational and universal they are not desired on the basis of immediate pleasure. *Wohl* and *Weh*, however, refer to feelings of pleasure and displeasure. *Wohl* and *Weh* refer to good and bad evaluated on the basis of inclination satisfaction. The distinction between these two senses of the words good and bad explain why we can call something good despite its causing pain. For example, having a cavity filled can cause pain (*Weh*), even though we consider it good (*Gut*).

This distinction shows that one can act in order to satisfy desires that do not have an immediate effect on inclination. Rational desires, such as actions that require short-term sacrifices for long-term gains, are an important stage in the development of finite rational creatures. Though these actions are still evaluated on the basis of their ability to satisfy inclination (in the long-term), they show that it is possible to overcome the demand to yield to immediate inclinations. This also explains one of the most basic prudential mistakes we can make, which is to over-estimate the importance of immediate inclinations.

Unlike *Wohl* and *Weh*, *Gut* and *Böse* have a special status as rational desires. But this does not mean more basic desires such as *Wohl* and *Weh* are to be dismissed. In a well-known passage from the second Critique, Kant insists that human beings must not ignore their inclinations:

> The human being is a being with needs (*ein bedürftiges Wesen*), insofar as he belongs to the sensible world (*Sinnenwelt*), and to this extent his reason certainly has a commission (*Auftrag*) 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. But he is nevertheless not so completely an animal as to be indifferent to all that reason says on its own and to use reason merely as a tool (*Werkzeuege*) for the satisfaction of his needs as a sensible being. For, that he has reason does not at all raise him in worth above mere animality (*Tierheit*) if reason is to serve him only for the sake of what instinct accomplishes for animals; reason would in that case be only a particular mode nature had used to equip the human being for the same end to which it has destined animals, without destining him to a higher end (*höhoren Zwecke*). (5:61-2)

This passage, in particular the teleological claims in the second part, echo Kant's comments on the purpose of happiness and the purpose of reason in the *Groundwork*.[15] Here, however, Kant notes that our possession of the faculty of reason does not mean we are permitted to ignore our sensible nature.[16]

One way of appreciating the tension between these two natures is by examining the elements that each nature depends on in order to be fully realized. In order to be happy in this life, the world (*Natur*) must conform to one's desires. In order to be virtuous, one's maxim must conform to the moral law. Happiness requires that certain outcomes in the world obtain; for

[15] Before moving on, I want to note that although Kant speaks rather poetically of humans being destined for a higher end than happiness, he has given arguments for the moral law both in the *Groundwork* as well as the preceding sections of the second Critique.

[16] It is important to note that the "can" here is ambiguous. It is not clear from this passage whether it is simply impossible for reason to ignore the commission from sensibility, or whether reason should not ignore the commission, though the fact that reason has a "commission" suggests the latter. Several passages suggest that Kant holds the former view as well: "To be happy is necessarily the demand of every rational but finite being and therefore an unavoidable determining ground of its faculty of desire" (5:25). Also relevant is the claim that even the most perfect human being who never places the demands of his senses above the demands of morality nevertheless acts for the sake of his happiness (5:127).

example, my team needs to win the game. Virtue requires having a moral cast of mind. Thus, while we have complete control over whether we attain virtue, we do not have complete power over whether we become happy. This of course calls to mind the highest good, the idea that happiness ought to be proportionate to virtue (5:110n). The highest good shows that morality is related to happiness only as the doctrine of "how to become *worthy* of happiness" (5:130).

Putting all this together, what does Kant make of the relation between morality and happiness? Kant considers the possibility, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, that there may be a duty to promote one's happiness. Kant denies the possibility of such a duty, but his argument has to do with the concept of constraint implied by duty and the psychological claim that human beings always seek to promote their own happiness (6:386). This psychological claim seems doubtful if one considers cases of depression or hopelessness, perhaps leaving open the possibility of a duty to promote one's own happiness (at least for consideration in this example). For my purposes it is worth considering the possibility that there is a duty to promote one's own happiness—not in order to justify the pursuit of happiness. Happiness of course needs no such justification. Still, this thought is worth considering because a duty to promote one's own happiness, if in fact there ought to be such a duty, could ground the duties to oneself as an animal being, insofar as a condition of being happy is a condition of being alive and of preserving oneself. As we will see, Kant claims that the duties to oneself prohibit suicide, unnatural lust (nonprocreative sex and masturbation), gluttony, and drunkenness. The problem is that while suicide, gluttony, and drunkenness may be indirect violations of the duty to promote one's happiness, it is not clear why it rules out nonprocreative sex and masturbation. And while it might be a welcome result to abandon Kant on this point, this explanation of the duties to oneself as an animal being as falling under the duty to promote one's happiness saddles Kant with a glaringly obvious mistake.

V. Perfection

A related possibility is that the duties to oneself as an animal being are more closely related to perfection rather than happiness. In fact, in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant does characterize the duties to oneself as duties of self-perfection. Perfect duties to oneself are summarized under the command “live in conformity with nature … that is, preserve yourself in the perfection of your nature” (6:419). Imperfect duties to oneself amount to the saying “make yourself more perfect than mere nature has made you” (6:419). This characterization is somewhat surprising because in both the *Groundwork* and in the second Critique, Kant makes explicit arguments against the use of the concept of perfection as a ground of obligation.

To begin, in the second Critique Kant explains that moral theory is subject to a paradox of method. The paradox of method states that “the concept of good and evil must not be determined before the moral law (for which, as it would seem, this concept would have to be made the basis) but only … after it and by means of it” (5:63). The argument is as follows. In a critique of practical reason, the crucial question is “whether the will has only empirical or also pure determining grounds a priori” (5:63). But if one begins with the concept of the good and then attempts to derive moral laws from it, one has already presupposed that the will can have only empirical determining grounds. This is because antecedent to any a priori principle which would identify the good, the only criterion for the good is “agreement of the object with our feeling of pleasure or displeasure” (5:63). Whether or not some object agrees or disagrees with our feeling of pleasure is an empirical matter. Therefore, to begin with a concept of the good is to assume that the determining ground of the will can only be empirical, which in turn leads to irresolvable disagreement concerning the status of various empirical goods. The problem is that if we identify the good prior to the right, we are assuming an answer to the most important

question in practical philosophy, namely, can the will be determined empirically, or is it possible for the will to have a pure determining ground?

The paradox of method shows that the concept of the good must not be determined prior to the moral law. This is the just the common-sense idea that we should not begin moral inquiry with a predetermined notion of what the good is. After all, different people have different ideas about what the good consists in, and moral theory should accommodate these differences to the greatest possible extent. The good ought to be whatever is left at the conclusion of reflecting on the nature of the right. The attempt to attribute normative authority to natural purposes would violate this requirement by assuming that it is good to act in accordance with natural purposes. The paradox of method thus seems to rule out the attempt to use teleological laws in moral theory.

In the *Groundwork* Kant offers a hint as to how this problem might be solved. There he writes that there are two kinds of rational principles that can serve as the ground of an agent's action: acting for the sake of the moral law or acting for the sake of one's own perfection (4:441-2). Kant rejects the perfectionist alternative, because he thinks that ultimately perfection is too vague to yield determinate moral laws. Unlike transcendental and metaphysical perfection, *practical* perfection "is the fitness or adequacy of a thing for all sorts of ends" (5:41). Independent of some end, practical perfection is too general and ethical content cannot be derived from it. Fortunately, animal nature provides a context within which perfection gains determinate content, a point Kant seems to have realized in the remarks about perfection in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. By articulating what type of nature a being has (animal being or moral being) a determinate answer can be given to the question of what perfection consists in. Practical perfection does not require the pursuit of any particular end, but the preservation of one's ability

to have ends at all. At the animal level this amounts to preservation of the self and of the species, and at the moral level this amounts to something like rational preservation. This is in line with Kant's summary of duties to oneself as the commands to "preserve yourself in the perfection of your nature" (6:419). The open-ended element of perfectionism goes away once the nature in question is clarified. The command is not to continue to make oneself more and more perfect (that is the task of the imperfect duties to oneself) but rather to preserve what is constitutive of one's nature. Preserving oneself in the perfection of one's nature requires that one does not act in ways that undermine one's nature.

This gets to the heart of the objection that the use of natural teleology involves an inappropriate appeal to natural facts. In specifying a natural purpose, it is important not to appeal to our *empirical* knowledge of natural creatures. That is, we must not take contingent features of our animal nature as the grounds for making teleological judgments. Teleological laws are not rooted in mere facts about our psychology, but are instead based upon philosophical anthropology, or an a priori analysis of human nature. Such a strategy does not violate the requirement stated by the paradox of method since perfectionism is a rational principle.

VI. Conclusion

The duties to oneself as an animal being command a kind of self-perfection. Moreover, Kant's understanding of this perfection is explicitly teleological. In the next chapter I will introduce the duties to oneself as an animal being. The main task of the next chapter is to motivate and defend a teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. To do so I will situate these duties within Kant's account of human nature, particularly the account of good and evil in human nature. After presenting a detailed discussion of a teleological conception of these vices, I will finish by explaining these vices in the context of Kant's theory of virtue. This

will help clarify the relation between the sort of perfection involved in these duties and what Kant calls “moral health” (6:419).

CHAPTER 2: ANIMAL NATURE AND MORAL SELF-PRESERVATION

In the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant claims that there are two types of duties to oneself: duties to oneself as an animal being and duties to oneself as a moral being. While it may seem puzzling that Kant thinks there are duties to oneself *as an animal being*, such duties are usually given a non-teleological explanation as obligations toward one's animal nature in virtue of the dependence of rational nature upon it.[17] For example, drunkenness is wrong because it weakens one's capacity for rational decision making. The problem is that according to these accounts the duties to oneself as an animal being follow from considerations that have to do with rational nature rather than animal nature. While this may seem like an obvious requirement for any Kantian view, the problem is that such accounts render duties to oneself as an animal being as indirect duties (in the sense that they depend on a more general obligation). That is, such views presuppose a general obligation to preserve one's rational abilities, from which duties to oneself as an animal being, among other obligations, follow.

I offer an alternative explanation of the duties to oneself as an animal being that is based on a teleological understanding of animal nature. Kant is clear that the duties to oneself as animal being arise out of the natural purpose of three "impulses of nature" (6:420). Of course, this approach is not without its own problems. Regarding the sexual drive, Kant infamously proclaims all non-procreative sex to be wrong. Although this particular claim is problematic, it is important to determine whether there are other considerations that ultimately favor a teleological account. Kant himself seems to have thought that natural teleology is required in an account of

[17] This connection might be expressive, in that treating one's animal nature in some way *expresses* disrespect for one's rational nature. See Lara Denis, "Kant's Ethics and Duties to Oneself," 326. The connection may also be instrumental, in that treating one's animal nature in some way impairs one's ability to exercise one's rational powers, for example, Mark Timmons' defense of what he calls the moral harm principle: Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 222-225.

duties to oneself as far back as the *Groundwork*. Moreover, without natural teleology the duties to oneself as an animal being would be indirect at best.

I will argue that natural teleology is key to understanding the duties to oneself as an animal being. This chapter presents a teleological account of duties to oneself as an animal being. I have two goals in this chapter: to motivate the claim that duties to oneself as an animal being require an appeal to teleology, and to explain what animal nature is, such that there is an obligation to preserve it. I begin by discussing the possibility of duties to oneself in general, and I explain why non-teleological interpretations of the duties to oneself as an animal being are unsatisfying. Next, I review Kant's account of human nature as containing both a predisposition to good and a propensity to evil. Then I proceed with an in-depth explanation of each of the duties to oneself as an animal being. I finish by discussing Kant's account of virtue, and the place of duties to oneself as an animal being in a virtuous life. I should note that although the appeal to natural teleology raises some obvious questions—most notably, how the appeal to natural teleology is consistent with Kantian autonomy—I will defer consideration of these objections until the next chapter. It would be premature to raise such objections before I have given my account of the duties to oneself as an animal being, or their place within Kant's moral theory.

I. Grounding Duties to Oneself (Or, How to Owe Something to Oneself)

Kant gives a systematic treatment of the duties to oneself in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. The *Metaphysics of Morals* consists of two parts: the doctrine of right (*Rechtslehre*) concerns external actions that can be regulated and coercively enforced, while the doctrine of virtue (*Tugendlehre*) concerns not only actions but also the internal states that comprise one's motive or

reason for acting. The doctrine of virtue begins with a defense of the claim that there can be duties to oneself.

The immediate problem is that duties to oneself seem to be incoherent. Consider duties to others. In the case of duties to others, it can seem as if one has an obligation unless one is released from it. For example, imagine promising to pick a friend up from the airport, but then your friend meets an acquaintance on the flight who offers them a ride. Your friend accepts their offer and communicates to you that they no longer need a ride from the airport. You have been released from your obligation.

The worry with respect to duties to oneself is that this suggests the possibility of releasing one from one's obligations to oneself. Duties to oneself are unique insofar as the same person occupies the position of agent and patient. If the self that is bound is the same as the self that binds, Kant asks, then what is to stop the latter from simply releasing the former from its obligations? In the case of duties to others it is unlikely that others will release one from one's obligations to others, but little seems to stand in the way of one's revising or cancelling a commitment made to oneself in the past.[18] The nature of duties to oneself (the same person binds and is bound) seems to allow for one to release oneself from one's obligations. As such, duties to oneself are not actual duties, since they are conditional.

In response, the first thing to observe is that it is misleading to assume that promising contains a general lesson that can be applied to all duties to others. The example of promising is misleading because it suggests that one could potentially be released from any obligation by the

[18] Andrews Reath writes: "the idea of constraint becomes meaningless or incoherent when a single agent occupies both of these roles, and that leads to a contradiction." Reath, "Self-Legislation and Duties to Oneself," in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Mark Timmons (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 351.

relevant individual.[19] While this is certainly true for promises regarding actions that are not already required or forbidden, such as picking up a friend from the airport, it is not obvious that *any* action can be made permissible on the grounds that the relevant person or persons consents to it. The attitude of a particular agent about slavery or extreme violence does not magically make such actions morally acceptable.[20] While there is something correct in the example, to the extent that one can be released from a promise, it is misleading as a model for duties to others.

A more significant problem is that by emphasizing the role of the other's ability to release one from an obligation, the example of promising obscures the role of self-legislation in duties to others. For Kant, all obligations are self-legislated.[21] When an agent is bound, she is bound to a law of her own reason, or to something to which she should accept upon reflection. Kant writes:

> I can recognize that I am under obligation to others only insofar as I at the same time put myself under obligation, since the law by virtue of which I regard myself as being under obligation proceeds in every case from my own practical reason; and in being constrained by my own reason, I am also the one constraining myself. (6:417-8)

Kant's view is that the moral law *must* be self-legislated in order for the agent to be given a compelling answer to the question 'why should I obey the moral law?' Anything less than self-legislation fails to account for the necessary status of moral imperatives as well as the agent's autonomy. In the case of morality what is binding is not the will of another, or anything else external. The only legitimate way to be bound is to bind oneself.

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[19] Alison Hills argues that rejecting duties to oneself on the grounds that duties to oneself are incoherent since the same person occupies both the role of lawgiver and subject rests on a misleading analogy between duties to oneself and promises in her paper "Duties and Duties to the Self," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2003): 131.

[20] It is worth pointing out that the claim that one may treat others or oneself however one pleases as long as one has the relevant agent's consent is precisely what is up for debate. For more on this point see Timmerman, "Kantian Duties to the Self, Explained and Defended," 516-7.

[21] See Reath, "Self-Legislation and Duties to Oneself," 353.

If there is a problem with this explanation, then it is a problem for Kant's theory of obligation in general and not with duties to oneself in particular. This objection to duties to oneself misunderstands the nature of self-legislation. My point is not to defend Kant's account of self-legislation, which is a task unto itself. However, I will say something about why the sort of mistake addressed here is somewhat common. In situations where one does not want to fulfill an obligation to another, as in the case of picking up one's friend from the airport when traffic is particularly bad, it can seem as if what binds one is the will of another. The person to whom the obligation is owed stands in a position of power, specifically, the power to call one out if one fails to meet the obligation. Or one puts oneself into the other person's situation and imagines what that person desires. But the fear of being called out for failing to meet one's obligation is not what grounds the obligation, nor does merely imagining what the other person desires. What grounds the promise as an obligation is a reason that one endorses or legislates, which in this case would be a general principle about the necessity of keeping a promise.[22] Although one can be released from particular instances of this obligation, one cannot be released from this more general obligation.

II. Preliminary Remarks on Duties to Oneself

After explaining how duties to oneself are possible, Kant proceeds with some general remarks. There is a single *objective* division of duties to oneself in terms of what is *formal* and what is *material*. Material duties to oneself are positive or widening. Material duties add to the ends that one must adopt and so are "duties of commission." They command self-cultivation, or "possessing a capacity sufficient for all [one's] ends, insofar as this can be acquired" (6:419).

[22] By reasons that one endorses or legislates I don't mean just any belief someone might have about promise keeping, for example the belief that obligations from promising are made up. Rather, to endorse promise keeping in this way is to hold that the practice of promise keeping is itself rational.

Material duties to oneself can be thus summarized under the command “make yourself more perfect than nature has made you (*perfice te ut finem, perfice te ut medium*)” (6:419). Material duties concern the matter of one’s maxim, in terms of the ends one must adopt, whereas formal duties concern the form of one’s maxim, in terms of what is and is not allowed.

Formal duties to oneself are limiting and therefore negative duties or “duties of omission” (6:419). Formal duties limit or restrict the ends one may adopt. In particular, formal duties to oneself prohibit actions that are “contrary to the end of [one’s] nature” (6:419). Because they prohibit acting contrary to one’s nature, formal duties to oneself fall under the title of “moral self-preservation” (*moralishe Selbsterhaltung*) and can be summarized “in the dictum ‘live in conformity with nature’ (*naturae convenienter vive*), that is, *preserve* yourself in the perfection of your nature” (6:419). Kant goes on to say that formal duties to oneself “belong to the moral health (*ad esse*) of a human being as object of both his outer senses and his inner sense, to the *preservation* of his nature in its perfection (as *receptivity*)” (6:419). Admittedly it is unclear what Kant means by moral health and moral self-preservation. I will offer my own account of moral health at the end of this chapter, once I have given my view of the duties to oneself as an animal being.

The talk of perfect duties to oneself in terms of moral health and preservation of the perfection of one’s nature suggests that Kant is already thinking of duties to oneself as associated with natural teleology. Taking perfect duties to oneself as duties that prohibit actions that are contrary to one’s nature raises the question of what Kant means by nature here, and on what grounds is an action contrary to it?[23]

[23] Again, I will discuss the appropriateness of the appeal to natural teleology, and especially whether it is in tension with Kant’s commitment to autonomy, in the next chapter.

This leads to the subjective division of duties to oneself. Regarding duties to oneself there are two aspects of human nature: the human being as an animal being and a moral being and the human being as a moral being only. Note that both aspects are moral. This is a reminder that one must be a moral being in order to be subject to duties to oneself, since non-human animals cannot have duties. Following Kant, however, I will refer to the duties to oneself as an animal being and a moral being simply as duties to oneself as an animal being.

Duties to oneself as an animal being relate to animal nature. Kant understands animal nature primarily as the possession of certain instincts or "impulses of nature" (6:420). These are a special class of appetites that are essential to all animal beings. The impulses of nature, or natural appetites, are apparently not sensible inclinations, since the latter are habitual desires caused by the feeling of pleasure (6:212-13). To say that a desire is caused or is preceded by pleasure is to highlight the role that experience plays in the formation of desire (6:212). To desire ice cream, for example, one must have eaten and enjoyed ice cream. The problem is to understand how there can be a class of inclinations—the natural appetites—that are not based in experience.[24]

The natural appetites involve feelings, often the feeling of a lack, as in the case of hunger. Of course, the feeling of hunger is closely related to the appetite for food; more precisely, the feeling of hunger may cause the desire for food. But the feeling of hunger does not necessarily give rise to the desire for food. In drawing a distinction between natural appetite and inclination, Kant is leaving room for the possibility that one could experience the feeling of hunger and not have the inclination for food. Kant explains this difference in terms of the determinacy of the object of desire. A natural appetite or instinct is indeterminate, at least at first. It is an awareness

[24] At least, as particular inclinations for things such as food or sex. There may be a way of characterizing the impulses of nature as inclinations in some quite general sense.

of a lack or of a need for *something*, without knowing exactly what. The most common case of this would be infants that have not yet acquired habits for procuring food. The infant experiences the pain of hunger but does not have an inclination for food, simply out of a lack of experience. Due to lack of experience, the infant does not desire a particular object. Nonetheless, it wants to leave the painful state. The natural appetites begin as indeterminate desires (instincts) that over time acquire determinate objects through experience (inclinations) (25:584). A toddler quickly transitions from the general desire not to be hungry to being rather insistent that her appetite for food can only be satisfied in certain ways.

Kant, as we have seen, often talks about inclinations as "obstacles" (*Hindernisse*) from our animality that need to be combated if one is to be virtuous (6:394).[25] Yet in the opening remarks on duties to oneself, he identifies the impulses of nature as guides to moral conduct in virtue of their natural teleology:

> There are impulses (*Antriebe*) of nature having to do with man's animality. Through them nature aims at a) his self-preservation (*Erhaltung seiner Selbst*), b) the preservation of the species (*Art*), and c) the preservation of the capacity to enjoy life (*Vermögens zum zweckmässigen Gebrauche seiner Kräfte und zum angenehmen*), though still on the animal level only. – The vices that are here opposed to his duty to himself are *murdering himself*, the unnatural use of his *sexual inclination*, and such *excessive consumption of food and drink* as weakens his capacity for making purposive use of his powers. (6:420)

Formal duties to oneself as an animal being are not positive commands. Rather, they are negative duties that forbid actions that are contrary to one's animal nature. Note that Kant does not identify the natural appetites here. The characterization of the natural appetites is in terms of their natural aims—I will return to the precise nature of these appetites later. Deviation from these natural aims results in vice: suicide, unnatural lust, gluttony, and drunkenness. Formal duties to oneself prohibit one from acting "contrary to the end of [one's] nature" (6:419). The

[25] Elsewhere Kant says inclinations are "vice-breeding" (*lastergebärenden*) (6:376).

duties to oneself as an animal being prohibit actions that are contrary to the natural purposes of the impulses of nature.

III. Duties to Oneself as an Animal Being

I will now examine some recent scholarship on duties to oneself as an animal being. None of these views adopt a teleological understanding of these duties, and as a result these views give rise to some conceptual and interpretive puzzles.

An obvious Kantian strategy for grounding duties to oneself as an animal being is to appeal to the dependence of rational powers upon animal nature. The thought is that self-legislation and self-constraint are exceedingly difficult and perhaps impossible when one treats one's animal self in certain ways. Oliver Sensen, for example, glosses violations of the duties to oneself as an animal being as actions that "damage the capacities to be moral."[26] Suicide, to take the obvious example, results in the permanent and total loss of one's rational powers, while drunkenness makes the exercise of one's rational powers temporarily impossible.[27]

Most commentators defend a version of this account. Mark Timmons defends what he calls the moral harm principle: "Unauthorized actions that destroy or harm one's capacity to pursue [nondiscretionary] ends or interfere with their pursuit manifest a lack of respect and thus violate this duty to oneself."[28] Suicide and gluttony manifest a lack of respect because they undermine "the proper exercise of those rational capacities that are constitutive of [one's]

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[26] Sensen, "Duties to Oneself,", 303.

[27] The exercise of one's rational powers is also impossible during sleep, but presumably sleep is acceptable because without sleep one would not be able to exercise one's rational powers well, if at all. Additionally, sleep might be considered something that merely happens to one—and just as illness might make it difficult for one to exercise one's rational powers, illness is not blameworthy insofar as one is a victim of it. With respect to sleeping, problems may arise if one is sleeping far too much. Presumably this would be associated with the vice of sloth or laziness and would have to do with the imperfect duty to develop one's talents.

[28] Mark Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 224.

agency."[29] On this explanation, the duties to oneself as an animal being forbid actions that render difficult or impossible an agent's ability to exercise her rational powers.

Lara Denis offers a similar account of the duties to oneself as animal being. Denis appeals to Kant's concept of "moral health," which she understands as "preserving one's ability to reason practically."[30] Even though these duties concern one's animal nature, the reason for conducting oneself in this way has to do with the special status of rational nature. I will refer to this general strategy of explaining the duties to oneself as an animal being as the instrumental account, since on these views animal nature is taken to be important in virtue of its instrumental relation to one's rational powers.

I should note my objection is not to instrumental or indirect duties as such. Indirect duties are often faulted for not accurately portraying, say, our moral duties concerning animals or natural beauty, or for moralizing our concern for happiness. Helga Varden defends indirect duties against these objections in her paper "Kant on Moral Responsibility for Animals."[31] Varden argues that it is possible to take animals, nature, and happiness as valuable in themselves, but that we should not confuse this value with *moral* value. I don't have a problem with the idea of indirect or instrumental duties as such, but I think that instrumental accounts cannot explain some of the crucial features of Kant's account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. The

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[29] Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 224. Timmons claims that suicide is wrong because it fails to treat one's own humanity as an end in itself insofar as suicide is taking discretionary ends as authorizations for ending one's life. He says that the examples listed above (sacrificing oneself for one's country, family, or personal honor) are cases of ending one's life for non-discretionary reasons (Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 228-9). As this suggests, it is ultimately the formula of humanity, in particular Timmons' interpretation of what it is to treat oneself merely as a means in the context of intrapersonal actions, not the moral harm principle by itself, that determines whether an action is appropriate. That is, the moral harm principle does not distinguish between authorized and unauthorized instances of ending one's life. Thus, Timmons does not hold what I am calling the instrumental account, though I think the moral harm principle by itself is representative of the instrumental account.
[30] Lara Denis, "Kant's Ethics and Duties to Oneself," 326.
[31] Varden, "Kant on Moral Responsibility for Animals," (forthcoming).

instrumental account is a natural way of attempting to understand why Kant would claim we have duties to our animal nature, in virtue of the dependence of rational capacities on the physical body in creatures like us. I don't dispute the substance of the instrumental account, and I agree that such concerns do generate obligations of some kind, but again this explanation alone is not adequate to Kant's account of the duties to oneself *as* an animal being.

One problem is that the instrumental account casts the duties to oneself as an animal being simply as specific instances of a more general requirement to preserve one's rational capacities.[32] Indeed, it is not clear why on this account there are three (or perhaps two, if one discards the prohibition against so-called unnatural sex, as Timmons does) distinct duties under the heading of duties to oneself as an animal being. Rather, the instrumental account seems to justify a single duty prohibiting treating oneself in ways that will sufficiently diminish one's ability to exercise one's rational powers. It is unclear how, on this account, there could be anything more than an indirect duty to one's rational nature, rather than the cluster of duties to oneself as an animal being (distinct from the duties to oneself as a moral being).[33]

Another problem concerns the compatibility of the instrumental account with Kant's view that animal nature is part of the predisposition to the good. Although it provides an account of why rational beings ought to care for their rational nature, the instrumental account does not demonstrate why rational beings ought to care for their animal nature, other than indirectly. As I noted in the previous section, Kant summarizes the duties to oneself as an animal being with the command to "preserve yourself in the perfection of your nature," which suggests that there is

[32] In fact, Kant gives this more general argument regarding the purposive use of one's rational powers in his comments on self-mutilation as part of his discussion of suicide.
[33] Perhaps Kant simply got this wrong, but this would be a significant error to attribute to Kant. A related worry is that the instrumental account cannot distinguish between formal and material suicide (formal suicide is killing oneself; material suicide is harming one's body), hence Timmerman's claim that the distinction is "puzzling." Timmermann, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 231.

something perfect in animal nature itself that is worth preserving. Both Denis and Timmons claim that duties to oneself are best understood in terms of the formula of humanity version of the categorical imperative.[34] On the instrumental account, animal nature is often viewed antagonistically, as something to be combated in order to preserve one's rational powers, or to preserve the requisite respect one owes to oneself. Animal nature is often in need of restraint, otherwise it will effectively or expressively compromise one's rational status. But as we will see, though Kant often speaks of animal nature as something opposed to morality, Kant's considered view is that animal nature is in fact part of the predisposition to good.

Additionally, the instrumental account suggests that Kant's list of vices is potentially incomplete.[35] Presumably many actions could endanger or fail to preserve one's rational capacities, such as engaging in too much play or certain kinds of extreme sports, or, on the opposite end of the spectrum, laziness.[36] But Kant's list of the vices of animal nature includes only the three vices of suicide, unnatural lust, and the pair of gluttony and drunkenness. As mentioned earlier, the instrumental account suggests that there is only a single duty (act in ways that express respect for one's animal nature) encompassing many potential violations, rather than the vices of animal nature that Kant identifies.

A further difficulty is that the instrumental account doesn't appear to take seriously Kant's appeal to teleology both as it appears in his preliminary remarks on duties to oneself, and

[34] I think the formula of humanity does not provide the best explanation of the duties to oneself as an animal being. For one, it is unusual to consider what it is to treat someone as a mere means in the context of intrapersonal actions. Unlike Timmons and Denis, Sensen derives the duties to oneself as an animal being from the formula of universal law: Sensen, "Duties to Oneself," 295-9.

[35] Kant does not explicitly say that the list of vices in the *Metaphysics of Morals* is complete, but it is presented as such (especially in light of his claim that animal nature contains three impulses of nature which form the basis of the teleological account of the vices of animal nature). Compare to the accounts of animal nature in the *Religion*, *Critique of Judgment*, and *Anthropology* accounts which, although they differ in content, also suggest that Kant is presenting a complete list of the vices of animal nature, given that animal nature contains only three natural impulses.

[36] Laziness is arguably a vice given the *imperfect* duty to oneself to develop one's talents (6:444-45).

in his specific argument regarding the vice of "unnatural" sex.[37] Or, to put this point differently, while the instrumental account can explain why Kant claims that suicide, gluttony, and drunkenness are wrong, it cannot explain why Kant claims that unnatural sex is wrong. In order to explain Kant's claim that unnatural sex is wrong, Timmons, for example, presumes that Kant must have thought that unnatural sex is destructive of one's rational powers (supposedly in a manner analogous to the way drunkenness effects one's rational powers), and for this reason it is immoral.[38] Absent this premise, it is hard to see how "unnatural" sex is any more destructive to one's rational powers than "natural" sex, and both would need to be condemned. While Kant perhaps believed this due to the quasi-scientific views of his time, we know such claims to be false.[39] Thus Timmons abandons Kant's views here. I propose, however, that it is worth taking teleological arguments seriously, especially since they appear long before the *Metaphysics of Morals* and in contexts that have nothing to do with unnatural sex. I will discuss teleology in greater detail in the next chapter, but I mention it here to point out that proponents of the instrumental account often fail to adequately account for the role of teleology in Kant's explanation of duties to oneself as an animal being, even if they wish to ultimately reject Kant's use of teleology.

Against the instrumental account, I propose taking Kant at his word and understanding the duties to oneself as an animal being as following from a teleological consideration of human nature. Before I can explain these duties in more detail, I must first examine Kant's account of

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[37] See Lara Denis, "Kant on the Wrongfulness of 'Unnatural' Sex," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (1989): 232

[38] See, for example, Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 240-2.

[39] Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 241. Timmons cites Kant's *On Pedagogy* (9:497n). It should be noted, however, that this passage is somewhat ambiguous. First, Kant is only discussing masturbation in this passage, rather than all forms of unnatural lust. Second, Kant writes that masturbation brings about old age and causes one's mind to suffer "a great deal," but it is unclear exactly what this suffering entails. Kant seems to think that masturbation is a particularly dangerous form of unnatural lust, an idea to which I will return when discussing this vice in more detail below.

animal nature, and in particular his view that animal nature is part of a predisposition to the good.

IV. Kant on Human Nature

The duties to oneself as an animal being are related to "impulses of nature having to do with man's animality" (6:420). Kant says little in the *Metaphysics of Morals* about the predisposition to animality aside from mentioning the natural appetites that comprise it. In the *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, however, Kant explains that animality is one part of the predisposition to good in human nature. The original predisposition to good in human nature is composed of three individual predispositions: animality, humanity and personality (6:26). The predispositions are "original," or necessarily part of the possibility of the human being (6:28). Specifically, the predispositions are a teleological self-understanding of human nature in the vein of Rousseau's distinction between *amor de soi* and *amor propre*. The predispositions identify distinct attributes of human nature that enable acting for the sake of different ends.

The first predisposition is animality, which aims at self-preservation, preservation of the species (the sexual drive) as well as preservation of the offspring, and community with other beings (the social drive).[40] Animality is "merely *mechanical* self-love, i.e. a love for which reason is not required" (6:26). The predisposition to animality consists of the natural appetites. Animal beings are able to achieve a kind of non-reflective good in terms of the satisfaction of these appetites. Moreover, the predisposition to animality enables the animal to live a life that allows for not just their individual flourishing, but the flourishing of the entire species, since the

[40] Note that in the *Religion* Kant mentions the social drive whereas in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant names the appetite for food and drink. I will return to this difference later.

appetites constitutive of animality are not in conflict, at least in principle. As in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, there are vices opposed to each of these natural appetites. The corresponding vices are gluttony, lust, and wild lawlessness. Since animality is a predisposition to good, the vices must be understood as grafted onto animality, not part of the original predisposition itself. I will say more about the metaphor of grafting in the next section on evil in human nature.

The second predisposition is the predisposition to humanity. Humanity introduces a form of self-love that is comparative, and so requires the use of reason (6:26-7). Mechanical self-love aims at physical survival of the individual and the species. The predisposition to humanity introduces a way of evaluating one's actions in relation to others. Humanity allows us to distinguish our standing as biological creatures with certain natural needs from our standing as social creatures. One desires not merely what is required to survive, but also to be esteemed by others. A side-effect of this desire for recognition is that it encourages the development of culture. Humans desire recognition from others, and this desire to impress can lead to novel and more ambitious pursuits. The predisposition to humanity makes possible social virtues like honor, but it also gives rise to vices that feed on our desire to be esteemed by others:

> Out of this self-love originates the inclination to gain worth in the opinion of others, originally, of course, merely equal worth: not allowing anyone superiority over oneself, bound up with the constant anxiety that others might be striving for ascendancy; but from this arises gradually an unjust desire to acquire superiority for oneself over others. (6:27)

Although this gives rise to the "diabolical vices" of envy, jealousy, and so on, Kant famously holds that there is yet something good in this strife, since the social competition generated by comparative self-love serves to move culture forward. Additionally, "it is only in comparison with others that we regard ourselves happy or unhappy" (6:27). To regard myself as happy, I must be able to compare my state with others. Crucially, I must judge myself to be happier than

others. Kant calls this dual aspect of our desire for recognition our "unsocial sociability" (8:20-1).

The third predisposition is the predisposition to personality. Personality is the ability to regard the moral law "*as of itself a sufficient incentive for the power of choice*" (6:27). Personality represents the ability to act for the sake of some value that is independent of biological needs and social norms. That is, the capacity to act from respect for the law is a capacity that goes beyond the previous predispositions. This capacity is exemplified in self-reflection and in the ability to be motivated by the form of a law. Moreover, personality involves a unique kind of feeling of respect for the moral law which Kant calls "moral feeling" (6:27). Since personality does not involve acting on a desire but instead acting out of rational respect for the law it is a "special predisposition," one that is not "already included in the concept of the preceding one" (6:26). Nevertheless, personality is nothing more than the idea of humanity considered wholly "intellectually," because as we saw, humanity involves the use of reason (though not pure practical reason) (6:26). Personality involves the ability to recognize the moral law as a new incentive, different in kind from incentives related to the objects of inclination. Unlike the prior predispositions, evil cannot be grafted onto the predisposition to personality (6:28).

V. Evil and Human Nature

I will now turn my attention to Kant's account of evil. I will begin by explaining Kant's account of radical evil. I will then explain the relationship between radical evil and the vices of animal nature, which Kant understands as perversions of the predisposition to animality. This account of the vices of animal nature is important for my understanding of Kant's concept of moral health, which I will explain at the end of the chapter.

Kant claims that human nature contains a predisposition to good, comprised of animality, humanity, and personality. But if human nature contains a predisposition to good, how is evil possible? Evil cannot be attributed to sensible nature, since if it were, we would not be responsible for it. So human beings must somehow freely choose evil. Kant also holds that evil is a necessary (though not essential) feature of human nature, complicating the matter further, since this suggests that irrational action (evil) is part of the free expression of the nature of an essentially rational being. More pertinent to my interests is a version of this problem as it concerns the natural inclinations and the vices of nature. How does our response to the natural inclinations, which aim at the good, become corrupted? The topic of Kant's account of evil is complicated, and a complete explanation is outside the scope of this work. Nonetheless, an explanation of how the natural inclinations become corrupted is crucial for what I will say later in this chapter about the relation between the duties to oneself as an animal being and virtue.

Kant claims that evil can be universally attributed to human nature. Just as there are three predispositions to good in human nature, there are three grades of a propensity to evil in human nature. Like the predispositions, the propensities are in some sense necessary features of human nature. The crucial difference between the two is that a propensity "can indeed be innate yet *may* be represented as not being such" (6:29). Evil is something that must be 'always already' chosen by human beings. Although evil applies to every member of the species, evil cannot simply be inferred from the concept of the species, hence it is not part of the essence of human beings (6:32). As we will see, Kant seems to think that 'every human being is evil' is true in fact, in virtue of anthropological facts about human nature, in particular the fact that human beings acquire practical reason in time.

The claim that the propensity to evil is universal in human nature is meant to explain the possibility of evil, given Kant's view that evil actions are practically irrational. On this sort of picture, it cannot be the case that some people simply choose evil—an explanation must be given for how this sort of practical irrationality is possible in the first place. One's fundamental moral character or disposition (*Gesinnung*) is attributed on the basis of the formal structure of one's most basic maxim. An evil disposition makes self-love the condition of the moral law, while a good disposition makes the moral law the condition of self-love. If the propensity to evil is universal, there must be something about the very structure of basic human choice such that every person has an evil disposition.

Consider the first of three grades of the propensity to evil: frailty. Frailty is moral weakness of will. The *akratic* recognizes the authority of the moral law, but under certain conditions the commitment to the moral law fails to stand up to inclination. The typical reaction of the weak-willed individual is to feel regret at having violated the principle he aspires to uphold. Weakness of will is a contentious issue, and it's not obvious whether Kant thinks clear-eyed weakness of will is possible. The problem is to understand how one could freely act against a maxim that one takes oneself to be committed to. One possibility is that frailty is the result of self-deception, for example, one knows that he should not park in the handicapped space, since he is not handicapped, but he does so because he is late for an important meeting.[41]

The second grade of the propensity to evil is impurity. Impurity concerns the possibility that one's motive is somehow mixed, or the possibility that one's motive is not mixed but that one's understanding of one's own motive is somehow mistaken. Either case is troubling because

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[41] Varden, *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming), 54.

it allows not just for error regarding one's motive but for self-deception.[42] In self-deception, the impure agent takes himself to recognize the authority of the moral law over self-love, but nonetheless depends on the hidden incentives of self-love to motivate him to perform the right action. The self-deceived agent acts in accordance with the moral law and takes himself to act from respect for the law but is in fact abiding by the moral law only thanks to its compatibility with self-love. Impurity is a special grade of evil because it brings with it the possibility of self-deception. In this way the impure agent can become dependent on the incentives of self-love for carrying out his moral obligations. The more the impure agent comes to rely on the motive of self-love for acting in accordance with morality, the weaker his resolve for acting from duty becomes.

Self-deception occurs when the inclinations are (or seem to be) subdued but unbeknownst to the agent this has taken place out of self-love, not morality. But the source of evil cannot lie within self-deception. After all, the individual who deceives himself does so precisely because he aspires to morality while at the same time requiring the extra incentive of self-love in order to fulfill the demands of morality.[43] So the root of evil must be deeper than self-deception. The possibility of evil is found in one's fundamental moral disposition (*Gesinnung*). This disposition can take two forms—the prioritization of morality over self-love (making morality the condition of self-love) or the prioritization of self-love above morality (making self-love the condition of

[42] Kant raises the problem of self-deception early in the second section of the *Groundwork*. Because of the temptation to "flatter ourselves by falsely attributing to ourselves a nobler motive," it is possible that any of one's actions are motivated by a "covert impulse of self-love" (4:407). In the *Religion*, Kant says: "Assurance of this [acting from duty] cannot of course be attained by the human being naturally, neither via immediate consciousness not via the evidence of the life he has hitherto led, for the depths of his own heart (the subjective first ground of his maxims) are to him inscrutable" (6:51), and "(Indeed, even a human being's inner experience of himself does not allow him so to fathom the depths of his heart as to be able to attain, through self-observation, an entirely reliable cognition of the basis of the maxims which he professes, and of their purity and stability.)" (6:65).
[43] David Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," *The Philosophical Review*, 114, no. 2 (2005): 161.

morality). The former is a good disposition, the latter an evil one. Kant calls the evil disposition one of "depravity," "corruption" or "perversity of the human heart."[44]

Depravity is thus the final grade of the propensity to evil, the "subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of … maxims from the moral law" (6:29). Kant refers to depravity as "the corruption of the human heart" which is the "propensity to subordinate the incentives of the moral law to others (not moral ones)" (6:30). Kant calls the third grade of evil "radical" because it is a fundamental disposition and therefore "corrupts the ground of all maxims" (6:37). It is important to stress that radical evil involves the subordination of moral incentives to self-regarding incentives in one's maxims. Human beings naturally incorporate both kinds of incentive into every maxim. To have a good or evil disposition depends on which incentive is prioritized. As evil, human beings make self-love the condition of morality. Radical evil is the corruption of one's mind "at its root" (6:30).

It should be noted that the account of radical evil leaves some important questions unresolved. Kant seems to be insisting that human nature is evil because we possess an evil *Gesinnung*, understood as the prioritization of self-love over morality. But how can depravity be freely chosen if one does not already possess a propensity to evil? In fact, Kant admits that depravity at its fundamental level is inexplicable:

> [T]his propensity to evil, remains inexplicable to us, for, since it must itself be imputed to us, this supreme ground of all maxims must in turn require the adoption of an evil maxim. Evil can have originated only from moral evil, (not just from the limitations of our nature); yet the original predisposition … is a predisposition to the good; there is no conceivable ground for us, therefore, from which moral evil could first have come in us. (6:43)

[44] There are of course many puzzles that accompany this view. The most concerning is the fact that one's fundamental disposition is freely chosen yet outside of time and imputable yet necessary (at least for human beings). I can't examine these issues in this paper, as this would take me too far afield from my investigation of the duties to oneself as an animal being.

Depravity is thus an irreducible characteristic of the species; it is freely chosen, yet it seems that there is no explanation for why this is the case. While mysterious, it is not clear what alternatives are available for Kant. What else could explain the possibility of evil for the human being, a rational creature with an original predisposition to good?

While it is not possible to explain why each individual adopts an evil *Gesinnung*, Kant does hint at an anthropological explanation of the possibility of evil for finite rational beings. Finite rational beings begin from an imperfect state and must acquire virtue through time.[45] Here I am following David Sussman's account of radical evil, which explains the possibility of evil as following from the fact that as human beings, we "do not attain our morally salutary self-conceptions all at once."[46] The problem is that the human being becomes acquainted with different aspects of the good, through the three forms of the predisposition to good in human nature, in time. Kant's account of the three forms of predisposition to good are reflected in the actual process of development that each individual experiences.[47]

It is not just a coincidence we start with animality, proceed to humanity, and finally to personality. According to Sussman, "each predisposition emerges only through our active perversion or distortion of the previous one."[48] For human beings, the predispositions are not acquired through a straightforward developmental process, but dialectically. The result is an antagonism between the predispositions. In the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* Kant

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[45] At this stage the argument might seem circular since the possibility of evil is attributed to the claim that the human being is imperfect. Yet, as we will see, this imperfection is not necessarily moral imperfection, i.e. evil, but is rather a distortion that accompanies the acquisition of competing evaluative outlooks in natural beings that acquire reason.
[46] Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," 166.
[47] See also the *Lectures on Pedagogy*, where Kant says that education proceeds from "discipline" or the "taming" (but not eradication) of animal nature, to the cultivation of one's skills, then to civilization, or prudent acquisition of the manners of one's culture, and finally to "moralization" or the "disposition to choose nothing but good ends" (9:449-50).
[48] Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," 166. While the predispositions to animality and humanity are good, they can, as we will see, come to have vices grafted onto them.

explains how this can be seen in the case of the sex drive. Human beings can preserve themselves and the species—considered merely as an animal being—long before they are capable of preserving themselves and the species in the civil condition, since the latter entails the acquisition of property, skill, and a fair bit of luck (8:116-7). This antagonism causes injury not just to morals, but also to nature. Morals appear as an obstacle to satisfying one's natural appetites, while nature is a burden in the pursuit of morality. Hence there is an "unavoidable conflict" between the predispositions, at least for human beings who must acquire these predispositions in time. The resolution to this conflict, however, is only under a perfect civil constitution. And the problem is that achieving a perfect civil constitution is marred by many of the same difficulties that face the individual in her attempt to achieve moral perfection. So begins the human being's antagonism to good.

To see this process in more detail, consider Kant's claim that the predisposition to good can come to have a vice grafted onto it, at least with respect to animality and humanity. As the metaphor of grafting suggests, evil is not part of the predisposition but there is nonetheless something in the predisposition that allows evil to flourish. Take the way in which a vice is grafted onto animal nature. Animals act according to their natural drives. Animals experience pleasure when they satisfy these drives, but pleasure is not that for the sake of which the animal acts. The object of an appetite is the attainment of the desired object (in the case of hunger, this would be the actual eating of food), rather than the feeling of pleasure that follows from this attainment.

Rational beings, however, can abandon their natural impulses and "concoct desires not only *without* a natural drive directed to them but even *contrary to* it" (8:111). In particular, rational creatures take the feeling of pleasure, nature's mark that one is living well, or at least the

way something of that life form ought to live, and turn it into something abstract that can be pursued independently of the impulses of nature. According to Sussman, as human beings venture on from mere animality practical reason we turn pleasure—the common feature of the satisfaction of the natural drives—into the "first nonnatural end … the first new end we truly set for ourselves."[49] This is the perversion of our natural drives, but as Sussman notes the perversion consists not merely in seeking pleasure for its own sake, but in regarding "this artificial desire as a natural need, deriving its authority not from our subjective choice, but from an objective grounding in nature."[50] Having invented a new object of desire, but pretending that this desire is natural, or something for which we are not responsible of our own free choice, the human being now finds itself able to engage in the natural vices, all the while believing that it is still acting in accordance with its natural drives which aim at the good. Hence Kant's repeated injunction at the end of the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History* that the troubles that oppress human beings are our own responsibility, not the fault of providence (8:121; 123).

According to Kant evil is the perversion of certain parts (animality and humanity) of the predisposition to good in human nature. Natural beings acquire the capacity for practical reason in time, and because this capacity must be acquired human beings are prone to pervert certain parts of the predisposition to good. Now that I have explained why Kant thinks human nature is evil, and how animal nature comes to have vices grafted onto it, I will turn to my teleological explanation of the vices of animal nature.

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[49] Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," 167.
[50] Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," 168.

VI. The Vices of Animal Nature

Since I understand Kant's account of the duties to oneself as an animal being teleologically, I will start with some remarks about purposiveness. I claim that the duties to oneself as an animal being identify as vicious maxims that are contrapurposive (*zweckwidrig*) with respect to the natural appetites. This follows the structure of Kant's preliminary remarks on duties to oneself as an animal being, in which Kant lists the aims of three "impulses of nature having to do with man's animality" and then lists three vices contrapurposive to those aims (6:420). To say that a maxim is contrapurposive with respect to a natural aim means that one's maxim is opposed to that natural aim.

My understanding of contrapurposiveness is with respect to the natural aim of the particular natural appetite (the appetite for food, for example, aims at preservation of the capacity to enjoy life), and not with respect to the being as a whole (flourishing or health). This is not to say that the appetite for food is completely unrelated to health, insofar as being sick or unhealthy impairs one's preservation of the capacity to enjoy life. Health enters the picture in a more direct way when one asks why a particular impulse of nature is essential to an animal being. While the proper functioning of all the impulses of nature will lead to a flourishing or healthy organism, contrapurposiveness with respect to the particular impulses of nature allows for a more fine-grained picture of what constitutes a violation of a duty to oneself as an animal being and why. Such violations occur not merely when an action is contrapurposive with respect to health in general, but in cases when an action is contrapurposive with respect to one of the impulses of nature.

A maxim is contrapurposive with respect to a natural aim if the maxim opposes the natural aim.[51] Consider gluttony, which is a vice not because it fails to be nutritious, but because it fails to preserve the capacity to enjoy life.[52] If consuming large quantities of food in a gluttonous manner is wrong, it is wrong because it is opposed to preserving one's capacity to enjoy life. Contrapurposiveness would be to eat in a certain way—consuming a vast quantity of food, and also, I shall argue, exclusively eating food of a certain kind—such that it impairs one's ability to enjoy life. The duties to oneself as an animal being command that when acting from an impulse of nature, one's maxim must not be opposed to the natural purpose of the impulse.

It is not the case that *any* maxim can be considered a duty to oneself as an animal being simply because it is contrapurposive with respect to some natural aim.[53] Kant begins the discussion of the duties to oneself as an animal being by listing the three natural aims of the impulses of nature (6:420). Kant does not actually state what these impulses are, but he seems to have in mind self-love (understood as a "predominant benevolence toward oneself" [5:73]), the sex drive, and the appetite for food and drink. He identifies the natural aims of these impulses as self-preservation, preservation of the species, and preservation of the capacity to enjoy life, though at the animal level only. The vices that are contrapurposive with respect to the aims of the three natural appetites are suicide (*Die willkürliche Entleibung seiner selbst*), defiling oneself by

[51] It can't be the case that simply failing to achieve the natural end constitutes a moral failure, since this could be due to luck. To oppose the natural end could involve actually having the frustration of the end as part of one's maxim, but in it could also involve having a maxim that cannot realize the end (as opposed to a maxim that sometimes realizes the end and sometimes does not).

[52] As we saw, when Kant lists the three natural aims of our natural appetites, he lists "preservation of the capacity to enjoy life" along with self-preservation and preservation of the species (6:420). I will say more about why Kant adopts this unusual account of the natural purpose of the appetite for food shortly.

[53] Kant appears to disagree since he claims that lying violates the natural purpose of speech, which leads to the conclusion that self-deception is a violation of one's duty to one's self *as a moral being* (6:429). This suggests that both duties to oneself as an animal being and duties to oneself as a moral being share the feature that both sets of duties are contrapurposive with respect to some (set of) ends. The difference is that duties to oneself as an animal being are contrapurposive with respect to the essential impulses of animal nature, whereas duties to oneself as a moral being are contrapurposive with respect to the essence of a moral being.

lust (*wohlüstigen Selbstschändung*), and anaesthetizing oneself by the excessive use of food or drink (*Selbstbetäubung durch Unmäßigkeit im Gebrauch der Geneiß oder auch Nahrungsmittel*).[54] For something to count as a violation of a duty to oneself as an animal being, it must oppose the natural aim of one of the impulses of nature. As I've already mentioned, Kant's account of which impulses are essential to animal nature changes from the *Religion* to the *Metaphysics of Morals*, so for the sake of completeness I will also discuss the vice of wild lawlessness.

A. Suicide

I will begin with a note on terminology. In the *Groundwork*, Kant uses the German *Selbstmord* (self-murder) to refer to suicide, while in the *Metaphysics of Morals* he uses the more nuanced *Selbstenleibung*, literally, self-disembodiment or disposing of one's body. In the latter work, Kant further clarifies that disposing of one's body can be formal (ending one's life) or material (disposing of a part of one's body). These refinements underscore, I think, Kant's attempt to clarify that his position was firmly rooted in natural teleology. His use of the term *Selbstenleibung* and the distinction between formal and material suicide is meant to rule out a purely instrumental account of these duties.

Despite this shift in terminology, even in the *Groundwork* Kant's argument regarding suicide appeals to natural teleology (4:422).[55] The *Groundwork* argument is that the maxim of killing oneself out of self-love—that is, killing oneself because one's future promises more misery than happiness—opposes the natural purpose of self-love, which is self-preservation.

[54] Mary Gregor translates *Selbstbetäubung* as "stupefication," which suggests that what makes gluttony or drunkenness a vice is its effect on one's rational capacities, as the instrumental account claims. However, anaesthetization seems to be a more neutral rendering of the term, since it leaves open whether the relevant effect concerns one's capacity to enjoy life (feeling) or one's ability to reason practically.
[55] Kant makes a similar argument in the second Critique at 5:43.

Since the natural purpose of self-love is self-preservation, a law of nature that held that self-love would require individuals to kill themselves would not be a well-ordered teleological system. The problem is that one is using self-love as a basis for ending one's life rather than for its natural purpose, which is to preserve life.

It is important to note that this argument only applies to actions where one's motive is self-love. In other words, this argument says nothing about the morality of suicide where the maxim in question refers to honor or sacrifice for one's country rather than self-love. In fact, Kant considers such cases in the "casuistical questions" for his discussion of suicide. Each discussion of the vices of animal nature contains a section of such questions where apparent violations of the duty under discussion are raised. Casuistry is an approach to ethics that proceeds through consideration of cases rather than beginning from principles, but Kant utilizes this method only after he has given his account of the vice of suicide. Their presence suggests that Kant recognizes the complexity of possible violations of the duties to oneself as an animal being. For the vice of suicide, two of the cases Kant considers in the casuistical questions are cases of Stoic suicide:

> Is it murdering oneself to hurl oneself to certain death (like Curtius) in order to save one's country? – or is it deliberate martyrdom, sacrificing oneself for the good of all humanity, also to be considered an act of heroism? Is it permitted to anticipate by killing oneself the unjust death sentence of one's ruler – even if the ruler permits this (as did Nero with Seneca)? (6:423)

Kant does not give an answer to these questions, but in the Collins Lectures on Ethics, he claims that Cato's self-murder represents an acceptable motive for suicide:

> Suicide can also come to have a plausible aspect, whenever, that is, the continuance of life rests upon such circumstances as may deprive that life of its value; when a man can no longer live in accordance with virtue and prudence, and must therefore put an end to his life from honourable motives. Those who defend suicide from this angle cite the example of Cato, who killed himself once he realized that, although all the people still relied on him, it would not be possible for him to escape falling into Caesar's hands; but

> as soon as he, the champion of freedom, had submitted, the rest would have thought: If Cato himself submits, what else are we to do? If he killed himself, however, the Romans might yet dedicate their final efforts to the defence of their freedom. So what was Cato to do? It seems, in fact, that he viewed his death as a necessity; his thought was: Since you can no longer live as Cato, you cannot go on living at all. One must certainly admit of this example, that in such a case, where suicide is a virtue, there seems to be much to be said for it. (27:370-1)

The claim that Cato's suicide is acceptable is not in tension with the teleological argument that suicide is a vice. The teleological argument against suicide only concerns suicide from self-love, where self-love is understood in its basic animal form, while suicide from an honorable motive would involve the comparative self-love of the predisposition to humanity. In other words, maxims that violate a duty to oneself as an animal being give rise to a teleological contradiction. A teleological contradiction is the failure to satisfy a natural appetite in a manner consistent with the natural purpose of that appetite. So, actions where one's motive is not natural appetite satisfaction cannot be a violation of a duty to oneself as an animal being.

Lastly, it should be noted that the appeal to the natural purpose of self-love may be woefully uncompelling to a person who is struggling to see the point of living, if, for example, they are considered to be an outcast because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or ethnicity for example. Such concerns have to do with identities that, although they are given and not the result of free choice, are taken to be deeply important. At the same time, to say that these identities are given is not to hold that they are the sort of thing that could be properly understood from a scientific third-personal perspective.[56] As parts of ourselves that are deeply important, we want to have the political freedom and protection to be who we are, and we also want to be publicly recognized and affirmed. Cases such as these seem to have little to do with basic

[56] Here I am following Varden's analysis of the givenness of sexual identity and sexual orientation in *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 126-7.

animalistic self-love, and instead seem to involve the complex dynamics of the kind of comparative self-love involved at the level of the predisposition to humanity.

B. Defiling Oneself by Lust

The second vice of animal nature is "Defiling Oneself by Lust" (6:424). Kant's discussion of this vice is his most obvious appeal to natural purposes. In fact, it is here that Kant for the first time (at least in the *Metaphysics of Morals*) introduces a crucial piece of terminology, the definition of a natural end: "that connection of a cause with an effect in which, although no understanding is ascribed to the cause, it is still thought by analogy with an intelligent cause" (6:424). This can lead to the impression that defiling oneself by lust is the only vice in which natural teleology plays a role, and that the troubling conclusions Kant reaches here can be avoided simply by rejecting natural teleology.[57]

Before discussing Kant's account of unnatural lust in the doctrine of virtue, it is worth briefly mentioning a few things from the doctrine of right discussion of sex and noting some comparisons.[58] In the doctrine of right, Kant claims there is a distinction between the natural and unnatural use of one's sexual organs. The natural use is that by which "procreation of a being of the same kind is possible," whereas the unnatural use "takes place either with a person of the same sex or with an animal of a nonhuman species" (6:277). Other forms of unnatural lust are

[57] See for example, Timmons, "The Perfect Duty to Oneself as an Animal Being," 237. Even Denis, who appreciates the role that teleology plays in the duties to oneself as an animal being more than most, admits that Kant's appeal to natural teleology stands out the most in the discussion of this vice. See Lara Denis, "Kant on the Wrongfulness of 'Unnatural' Sex," 232

[58] In the doctrine of right, Kant claims that the only appropriate way to engage in sexual relationships is through the legal institution of marriage. For a few different ways of unpacking these claims, see Barbara Herman, "Could It Be Worth Thinking About Kant on Sex and Marriage?," in *A Mind of One's Own*, eds. Louise M. Antony and Charlotte E. Witt, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002); Christine Korsgaard, "Creating the Kingdom of Ends: Reciprocity and Responsibility in Personal Relations," *Philosophical Perspectives* 6 (1992).

sex with someone of the opposite sex in a nonprocreative way, the use of contraceptives, and of course masturbation.

In the doctrine of virtue, the question is whether one "is authorized to direct the use of his sexual attributes to mere animal pleasure, without having in view the preservation of the species" (6:424). Again, note the rather narrow scope of the maxim under evaluation—concerning "the use of his sexual attributes to *mere* animal pleasure." This important qualification reflects the general point that the duties to oneself as an animal being only concern maxims that refer to impulses of nature. Kant answers that one is *not* authorized to use one's sexual attributes for mere animal pleasure but admits that "it is not so easy to produce a rational proof" in support of this judgment (6:425). As it turns out, Kant's argument does seem quite simple: the natural purpose of the sex drive, or lust, is the preservation of the species. When lust does not "have preservation of the species in view," as Kant says, it is contrapurposive and therefore wrong.

One difficulty here is to articulate precisely what sorts of actions "unnatural lust" picks out. Doing so requires an account of what it means to aim at "mere animal pleasure" and also what it means to have the preservation of the species "in view." I take it that by mere animal pleasure Kant means to distinguish the basic physical pleasure of sex that is possible for any animal being from something like romantic love, and also from the sorts of more complex kinds of sexual satisfaction possible for human beings. As a result, maxims where one's aim goes beyond mere animal pleasure are not under evaluation here. Nor is Kant speaking to the complicated and potentially problematic ways in which sexual desire can involve the objectification and domination of another rational being.[59] Although these are major concerns for

[59] For more on Kant's account of sexual desire, specifically how sexual desire is importantly understood as directed at other *persons* and not merely at other *bodies*, see Helga Varden, *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 122. Varden's also nicely captures the Kantian thought, expressed most clearly in the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, that reason transforms our basic animal appetites, such that base animal desires become aestheticized: *Sex,*

Kant—see his discussion of marriage in the doctrine of right and the discussion of sexual desire as a passion in the *Anthropology*—it should be clear that these are concerns that have to do either with disrespect for another being as rational being or with forms of desire related to the predisposition to humanity, rather than the impulses of nature associated with the predisposition to animality under discussion in the duties to oneself as an animal being.

The idea of having the preservation of the species in view is slightly more complicated. The claim that preservation of the species must be in view recognizes that, due to the nature of reproduction, it would be impossible to require that the kind of sex under consideration here *must* result in reproduction, since it is impossible to know if a particular instance of sex will result in procreation, or a person might be unaware of a condition that prevents them from being able to reproduce. The stipulation that preservation of the species must be in view is presumably meant to rule out masturbation, homosexual sex, the use of contraception, and non-procreative heterosexual sex—cases in which one knows that reproduction cannot occur, or when one intentionally takes steps to reduce the likelihood of reproduction.[60] It is perhaps tempting to construe having the preservation of the species in view as the additional claim that one must intend to reproduce each time one has sex, but the whole point of teleological understanding of nature is that while natural purposes are analogous to intelligent causes, natural teleology must be able to describe not only animal choice but also, as I will explain in the next chapter, all of organic nature. Finally, having the preservation of the species in view is not merely wishing to reproduce; to some extent one is limited by biological facts about how creatures like us

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Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory, 121-2. This allows for an understanding of sexual desire as a variety of aesthetic desire, rather than mere animal desire that objectifies the beloved: *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 126.

[60] I should note that the notion of "having in view" need not be taken as explicit end-setting. An animal does not know that sex will generally lead to procreation, but nonetheless when an animal has sex it has preservation of the species in view. In the context of natural teleology this conclusion is not surprising.

reproduce, and by facts about one's body. The metaphor of having reproduction in view suggests then that while reproduction need not be one's focus or explicit aim, it must be 'in frame' in the sense that it is actually possible and not a mere illusion or wish. Moreover, this metaphor also rules out 'obscuring' something that would normally be in view, in the sense of contraception or other methods of avoiding procreation.

The vice of unnatural lust consists in the pursuit of mere animal pleasure from sex when one is aware that reproduction is not possible, or when the possibility of reproduction is intentionally diminished.[61] Since the natural purpose of lust is preservation of the species, the pursuit of mere animal pleasure from sex must is acceptable only when preservation of the species is in view. While this rules out homosexual sex and contraception, at least when the aim is mere animal pleasure, it of course also rules out masturbation. In fact, masturbation may be the worst realization of the vice of unnatural lust, since it fails not only with respect to the possibility of preserving the species, but also in the more basic sense that one's desire is directed toward something inward rather than toward another person. Kant explains that "lust is called *unnatural* if one is aroused to it not by a real object but by an object of his imagining it, so that he himself creates one, contrapurposively" (6:424-5). Masturbation thus exhibits the vice of unnatural lust in a fundamental way, since one's desire is not directed at an actual person.

It is important to note that although Kant's focus in the *Metaphysics of Morals* is on the preservation of the species in the context of reproduction, preservation of the species also involves raising children. When Kant discusses the sex drive as part of the predisposition to animality in the *Religion*, he emphasizes both the "propagation of the species" through

[61] It is not obvious how to assess a case where a person knows that they are incapable of having children. Kant raises such a case in the casuistical questions. The fact that Kant at least raises this as a question is somewhat encouraging, since it suggests that he appreciates some of the difficulty in forbidding straight couples from having sex simply because reproduction is impossible.

reproduction as well as the "preservation of the offspring" (6:26). This suggests a further qualification of what it means to have the preservation of the species in view. In the *Lectures on Pedagogy* Kant says that "the human being can only become human through education" (9:443). Since the full realization of human nature requires education, preserving the human species requires more than ensuring that one's offspring become self-sufficient at realizing their animal ends, it requires education and civilization.

Kant's view is that sexual gratification that aims at mere animal pleasure is prohibited in many cases where one knows that reproduction is not possible, or at least intentionally reduced. Again, I think Kant's view here—as in the case of each of the duties to oneself as an animal being—concerns only maxims where one's motive has to do with an impulse of nature. As such, the vice of unnatural lust should not be taken as a general condemnation of non-procreative sex with another person.[62] Non-procreative sex with another person is appropriate as long as one's aim is not mere animal pleasure. The suggestion is that the natural teleological account is appropriate for what Kant calls carnal lust, but not for romantic love.

The doctrine of right account suggests that there is an exhaustive distinction between natural and unnatural use of one's sex organs, and that any use will be either natural or unnatural. By the doctrine of virtue, however, Kant at least seems open to considering that this is not the case, as seen in the casuistical questions where Kant asks if a woman is permitted to have sex if she is pregnant or sterile. By raising this issue in the casuistical questions, Kant recognizes that it is not always obvious what counts as a natural or unnatural use of one's sexual organs. This is

[62] The appeal to natural teleology does not warrant a general condemnation of homosexuality. This is not to ignore Kant's other remarks in the *Metaphysics of Morals* concerning homosexual sex. For example, in in the doctrine of right Kant says homosexuality is "unnatural" and that there are "no limitations or exceptions whatsoever that can save [it] from being repudiated completely" (6:277). My account should not be understood as claiming that there are exceptions or limitations. Instead, I claim that the cases in which appeal to natural teleology is appropriate are limited to cases in which one acts on an impulse of nature.

not to deny that there is an answer to the question, but rather to understand the difficulty of reaching this answer in some cases—a fact which Kant seems to appreciate more in the doctrine of virtue.[63]

Though Kant's position is not as extreme as one might initially have thought, it is still problematic in that he claims that the pursuit of mere animal pleasure from sex is appropriate for straight individuals (who have reproduction in view) but not for gay persons. Sexual orientation is part of one's identity and sexuality is an important part of a happy life. Kant perhaps failed to fully appreciate this point. In this respect Kant's views on sexuality are unfortunate, along with his views on the differences between races and the differences between the sexes. My goal is not to apologize for Kant's problematic views, but to articulate the teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being, which I take to be the best account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. An advantage of this account is that it allows for an understanding of Kant's admittedly problematic views on homosexuality that does not attribute those views simply to prejudice or quasi-scientific views about the psychology of unnatural lust. Moreover, a teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being allows for a somewhat refined view of exactly when sex that does not promote the preservation of the species is appropriate; namely, when one's aim is *not* mere animal pleasure. Any account of the duties to oneself as an animal being must reckon with Kant's problematic views on homosexual sex. A teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being best explains Kant's views, and allows for a relatively nuanced view of precisely when one must have the preservation of the species in view.

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[63] One way of framing this shift is to say that it reflects an uncertainty as to whether what is under consideration are sex acts as particular tokens, or as types, which would then lead to the issue of how to individuate those types.

C. Gluttony and Drunkenness

The appetite for food and drink is the third natural appetite discussed in the introductory remarks on duties to oneself as an animal being. What is the natural purpose of the appetite for food? The traditional answer is self-preservation, specifically nutrition. Kant however disagrees with the tradition on this question. For one, Kant has already attributed self-preservation to another natural appetite, namely, self-love.[64] For Kant, the natural purpose of the natural appetite for food is to preserve the "capacity to enjoy life, though at the animal level alone" (6:420).[65] The capacity to enjoy life at the animal level alone is the ability to feel pleasure and displeasure. Gluttony is thus to satisfy the appetite for food in a way that damages the capacity to enjoy life.

Unlike nutrition, however, preservation of the capacity to enjoy life is not obviously related to self-preservation, aside from the fact that one must be alive in order to enjoy life. But Kant's point is that the capacity to enjoy life at the animal level alone—the ability to feel pleasure and displeasure—is vital to the survival of animal beings. In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant defines pleasure as the representation of the feeling of life (5:204).[66] I will say more about pleasure and displeasure in the next chapter, but for now I will just note that Kant understands these feelings as already teleologically. The feeling of pleasure and displeasure represent the

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[64] Moreover, Kant already considered this account of gluttony (as wrong because it fails to preserve life) in the *Religion*. Kant abandons this view by the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

[65] This rather general characterization of the natural end here raises questions about why the sex drive is not characterized similarly. Or to put it differently, why does Kant seem to hold that the sex drive is apparently unrelated to the capacity to enjoy life, and why does Kant fail to consider something like the parallel to gluttony in the case of the sex drive? Regarding the first question, I take it that Kant does not believe there is no relationship between the sex drive and the capacity to enjoy life. But the teleological principle holds that we must regard everything in nature as having one natural purpose (and as being best suited for that purpose). Although the sex drive is related to the capacity to enjoy life, its natural purpose is preservation of the species. Regarding the parallel to gluttony for the sex drive, Kant may have simply thought that something like was already ruled out through the prohibition on masturbation.

[66] See also the following passage from the *Critique of Judgment*: "The consciousness of the causality of a representation with respect to the state of the subject, for maintaining it in that state, can here designate in general what is called pleasure; in contrast to which displeasure is that representation that contains the ground for determining the state of the representations to their own opposite (hindering or getting rid of them)" (5:220). In a footnote in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant says that pleasure represents the "agreement of an object or of an action with the subjective *conditions of life*" (5:9n).

world as good or bad for one's form of life. Absent the capacity to feel pleasure and displeasure, survival for animal beings would be difficult since the animal would lack any indication of whether something agrees or disagrees with its form of life. Pain in particular helps draw attention to injuries so that one can attend to oneself in ways that allow for healing and recovery. Note that Kant's claim is not that anything that is pleasant does in fact agree with one's form of life. Kant's claim is that pleasure is the representation of the *feeling* of life, not the representation of life itself.[67] Hence, unhealthy food can taste good and medicine can be unpleasant.

It is important to emphasize the capacity to enjoy life because otherwise Kant's criticism of gluttony and drunkenness appears to be the mere fact that overconsumption of food or drink leads to a loss of the ability to use one's rational powers purposively. Kant does seem to speak this way, but the natural aim of eating is preservation of the capacity to enjoy life at the animal level, not to preserve one's rational capacities. Moreover, if that were really all there is to Kant's account, gluttony and drunkenness would be just two of many activities that, when overindulged in, could lead to the loss of one's ability to use one's powers purposively. I do not deny that gluttony and in particular drunkenness are wrong if they make it difficult to exercise one's rational powers. But as I claimed earlier when discussing the instrumental account, such a duty would not be a duty to oneself as an animal being. Again, Kant is explicit in the opening remarks on duties to oneself that the natural purpose of eating is to preserve one's capacity to enjoy life at the animal level alone, and the vice of gluttony is damaging to this capacity.

It can seem as if the capacity to enjoy life is not something that needs to be actively maintained. This is especially true since what is under consideration here is not some faculty for

[67] See the *Friedländer Anthropology Lectures*: "Pain is not related to the proportion of ill, but the proportion of the feeling of ill. Often something which nature has adapted for this end, has produced a feeling of great enjoyment and pain, although the former is no promotion and the latter no hindrance of life" (25:559).

discerning higher pleasures but rather the more basic capacity to enjoy life at the animal level. Nonetheless, it is possible to damage the capacity to enjoy life. Although an unusual account of gluttony, one advantage of Kant's account is that it does not entail that eating for the sake of pleasure is wrong, a conclusion accepted by most who take gluttony to be a vice, such as Augustine and Aquinas.[68] But since Kant understands pleasure and displeasure teleologically, his own view actually ends up quite close to the view advocated by Augustine and Aquinas, but on very different grounds. In the Friedländer Anthropology Lectures, Kant is quoted as saying that "Taste requires the most satisfaction, since everything pertaining to the maintenance of the body occurs through it," suggesting that he took the pleasure (or pain) in food as for the most part reflecting that which is good and bad for the body (25:499).[69]

Kant begins by noting that the vice under consideration here does not have to do with harm or disease that one brings upon oneself through overconsumption of food or drink, since that would have to do with rules of prudence, not duty. Kant summarizes the vices of gluttony and drunkenness as follows: "Brutish excess in the use of food and drink is misuse of the means of nourishment that restricts our capacity to use them intelligently" (6:427). What does it mean to use the means of nourishment intelligently? I propose that Kant thinks gluttony and drunkenness interfere with the basic function of the capacity to enjoy life, which is to serve as the feeling of life. This is the most that Kant could mean by the intelligent use of the means of nourishment, since as I've noted he identifies the natural purpose of the appetite for food and drink as the

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[68] Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 204, 207. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 148, Art. i-iii.

[69] The notes continue: "Nature has endowed us with taste so that we should examine through it what is useful for our body, which we do even without being particular about it. And taste also differs in accordance with the difference in the disposition of the body. If the body is sickly, one has a loathing for meat and an appetite for something sour, which is also just what is useful for the body. Therefore the glands, intestines, and everything together must constitute a system, and taste examines what is salutary for it" (25:499).

"preservation of the capacity to enjoy life (at the animal level alone)" (6:420). While it is very tempting to take Kant's argument here as saying that gluttony and drunkenness are wrong because they make it difficult to reason practically, Kant's identification of the natural end of this appetite rules out such a conclusion.

Though the vices of gluttony and drunkenness are understood to both be contrapurposive with respect to the same end, Kant's evaluation of them is slightly different. While the drunk is "like a mere animal," the glutton:

> is even lower than that animal enjoyment of the senses [drunkenness], since it only lulls the senses into a passive condition and, unlike drunkenness, does not even arouse imagination to an active play of representations; so it approaches even more closely the enjoyment of cattle. (6:428)

While drunkenness allows for a play of representations and fantasy, gluttony is more like sedation, and thus the worse vice. In what follows I want to spell out Kant's account of gluttony a bit more.

To begin, take the most familiar case of gluttony as overconsumption, eating or drinking too much can leave one temporarily incapacitated and thus unable to participate in enjoyable pursuits and even unable to enjoy a variety of basic pleasures. In the long term, gluttony and drunkenness can cause a number of health problems that also inhibit one's ability to enjoy life at the animal level. Again, it is not the mere fact that gluttony causes pain or health problems that makes it a vice, but the fact that it impedes one's ability to enjoy life, either through the long-term dulling of one's senses or by giving rise to health problems that interfere with one's otherwise fine ability to enjoy life.

Gluttony and drunkenness fail to preserve the capacity to enjoy life in the most straightforward cases by making one incapable of enjoying pleasure. Overconsumption of food can leave one unable to enjoy food. In the *Anthropology* Kant claims that enjoyment and pain

must follow one another, and that enjoyment is impossible without intervening pains (7:231).[70] This is a strange claim, but Kant's thought seems to be that one fails to fully appreciate a pleasure if one's experience of it is un-interrupted. Between bites of food, the intervening pain of hunger that is not yet fully satisfied makes one's next bite even more enjoyable. The glutton eats beyond the point of full enjoyment, since his hunger is satisfied, and he no longer feels the intervening feeling of pain that would allow him a full enjoyment from food. The problem is not simply that one is failing to maximize his enjoyment, since this would simply be a failure of prudential reasoning. Instead, the problem is that the glutton is no longer able to understand the effect of food on his body in the right way, given that his ability to enjoy food has been impaired. Enjoyment and pain are supposed to signal the promotion or hindrance of life, but the glutton risks upsetting the ability to feel enjoyment and pain in systematic ways, by being pained by things that ought to be enjoyable, by not enjoying things fully, or by simply deadening his taste through overstimulation. In extreme cases overconsumption of food can leave one temporarily disgusted by the mere thought of food, similar to the way one might be sickened at the thought of alcohol when hungover.

Kant's somewhat unusual view departs from the traditional understanding of the natural purpose of the appetite for food as nutrition or health. Nevertheless, in general the capacity to enjoy life still involves the health of the individual, insofar as Kant understands the feeling of pleasure and displeasure as teleological in nature. The vice of gluttony consists of overeating, or of eating in particular ways that impair one's ability to enjoy pleasure from food.

Kant's use of natural teleology in arguing that gluttony and drunkenness are vices does not preclude his having a proper appreciation of the distinctly human ways of eating. This is

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[70] Kant says that "*pain must always precede every enjoyment*" and that "*no enjoyment can immediately follow another*" (7:231).

perhaps most clear with respect to gluttony and drunkenness than either of the two previous vices, since Kant himself notes that drunkenness, though a vice, is nevertheless beneficial with respect to the social purpose of the meal, insofar as alcohol facilitates social activity (6:428). Kant also had a deep appreciation for the social purpose of the meal, regarding it as moral (6:428), and writing that "The good living that still seems to harmonize best with true humanity is a good meal in good company" (7:278).[71]

D. Wild Lawlessness

Kant mentions wild lawlessness as contrapurposive to the drive for community with other beings in the *Religion*. As we will see, Kant appears to have changed his mind more than once about whether the third natural appetite is the appetite for food or community with other beings. The earliest discussion of these natural ends appears in the *Critique of Judgment*, though it should be noted that there Kant is not discussing animal nature proper but rather organisms (a category that includes plants as well as animals). In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant says that the organism aims at preservation of the species, growth (understood as the incorporation of external material), and plasticity or self-maintenance through reciprocal part-whole relations. I will return to the *Critique of Judgment* account of organisms in the next chapter. The *Religion* marks Kant's second discussion of these natural ends, this time as the ends of animality. The mechanical self-love of animality aims at self-preservation, preservation of the species, and community with other beings. Interestingly, in his list of the vices opposed to these ends Kant lists gluttony, lust, and wild lawlessness; there is no mention of suicide. Finally, as we have seen, in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant claims that the natural ends are self-preservation, preservation of the

[71] For a wonderful analysis of Kant's thoughts on the ethical and social aspects of dinner parties, see Alix A. Cohen, "The Ultimate Kantian Experience: Kant on Dinner Parties," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (October 2008).

species, and preservation of the capacity to enjoy life, the vices of which are suicide, unnatural lust, and gluttony and drunkenness.

Kant's account of the necessary ends of animal nature, and vices contrapurposive to those ends, changes through each successive account. Clearly this was an important but difficult topic to Kant, and before I continue, I want to comment on Kant's evolving view of the natural ends of animality. To begin, I think the *Critique of Judgment* account is somewhat preliminary, and it is complicated both by the fact that Kant is discussing organisms rather than animals, which are a particular type of organism, and also by the fact that he does not discuss the vices that oppose these ends.

It is unclear what precipitated Kant's shift from the *Religion* account of these ends to the *Metaphysics of Morals* account. Kant simply presents them without pausing to explain how or on what grounds he has decided to identify these ends as such. Varden has suggested that the natural ends of animality are taken from the relational categories of the understanding (A 80/B 106). On her view, the category of substance is related to self-preservation, the category of causality is related to preservation of the species, and the category of community is related to community with other beings.[72] This seems right to me, but unfortunately I don't think it resolves the question of which interpretation is correct. As I have argued, the enjoyment of life can be taken as constituting a kind of community not in the usual sense but still in the sense of community as a kind of reciprocity within the animality. Enjoyment and pain serve as the animal being's awareness of whether their life is being promoted or hindered. Pain in particular serves as a way for one to recognize when, for instance, a particular part of one's body needs to be looked after so that it may heal and return to its original function within the whole. This seems to me to be the

[72] Varden, *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 46.

analogue of the plasticity of organisms, or the ability to heal and make changes in response to changes in their environment, which Kant characterizes explicitly in terms of reciprocal part-whole relations. So, while I don't think that the relational categories of the understanding settles the debate, it seems to me that Varden's insight is nonetheless vindicated. The fact that either alternative can be defended shows why this must have been a difficult issue for Kant. I will now proceed with my discussion of wild lawlessness.

Wild lawlessness is not a familiar vice, and Kant's scant remarks about it do not make it any easier to understand.[73] As such my thoughts here will be somewhat speculative. Again, the natural purpose of the social drive is "community with other beings"—which presumably picks out a rudimentary form of sociality in contrast to the more sophisticated forms social desires such as recognition from others that come in under the predisposition to humanity—and the vice opposed to it is wild lawlessness. Part of the difficulty is that it is hard to understand exactly what this rudimentary social desire could be, and Kant himself says very little about what he takes wild lawlessness to be. If the vices of animal nature are to be understood teleologically, wild lawlessness is contrapurposive with respect to the natural purpose of the social drive, which is community with other beings. But again, this form of community with other beings must not involve comparison or reflection that is typical of human (social) communities.[74]

Since it is hard to imagine a form of community that does not already involve anything comparative or reflective, it might help to consider 'wild lawfulness' as a way of understanding wild lawlessness by contrast. 'Wild lawfulness' might refer to some sort of non-reflective association or hierarchies that forms the basis of order in animal communities. I'm not thinking

[73] Sussman understands wild lawlessness as daredevil-type thrill seeking behavior. Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," 168.
[74] Varden understands community with other beings as the sort of thing exemplified by playful activity with others, including with animals. Varden, "Kant and Moral Responsibility for Animals," (forthcoming).

of sophisticated social hierarchies, but of dominance hierarchies that give rise to distinct roles occupied by members of those communities, for example in a wolf pack. There are norms for hunting, finding shelter, defending the pack, mating, raising the young, and so on.[75] Such activities are possible because animals perceive or recognize others *as* of their kind. The wolf has a sense of belonging in the pack. The alpha female understands her role as well as the role of others in her pack. There is a kind of association going on in these relationships. Community with other beings, at the level of animality, might thus be something like the feeling of belonging and an affinity for others of one's kind. Wild lawlessness, on my view, would amount to a contrapurposive use of the social drive. Rather than achieving community with other beings, it would result in isolation. In human beings, this could take the form of rugged individualism or perhaps the desire to be viewed as cool through one's purported disregard for the opinion of others.

A proper treatment of what Kant might mean by the vice of wild lawlessness would require more discussion. In addition to the fact that Kant does not say much about wild lawlessness (and indeed seems to change his mind by the time he writes the *Metaphysics of Morals*), discussion of this vice is made difficult by the fact that it involves a kind of pre-social and pre-reflective sociability, of which Kant unfortunately provides no examples.

VII. Kant on Virtue

I will now discuss the place of these vices within Kant's theory of virtue. At first this may seem fruitless, since Kant explicitly argues that there are not corresponding virtues of animal nature. Nonetheless, there is something positive that comes from obeying the duties to oneself as

[75] Of course, this is not true of all animals. Some species are more solitary and independent than others. Perhaps this is why Kant denies that the social drive is one of the impulses of nature in the *Metaphysics of Morals*.

an animal being, insofar as they promote what Kant calls our "moral health." I will finish this section by offering a sketch of what I take moral health to be.

Kant understands virtue as a kind of "moral strength" or strength of will (6:405). The very concept of strength, Kant writes, presupposes opponents or obstacles: "in the case of virtue these obstacles are natural inclinations which can come into conflict with the human being's moral resolution" (6:394). But what sort of conflict is this? Obviously it cannot be a conflict of one inclination against another, since this would not be the result of free choice.[76] Rather, Kant imagines a conflict between inclination and one's moral resolution, suggesting that the strength on the side of one's moral resolution is a unique kind of strength. Kant explains that this moral strength is something that must be acquired:

> One may also indeed say that the human being is obliged to acquire virtue (as a moral strength). For while the capacity (*facultas*) to overcome all sensibly opposing impulses can and must be absolutely *presupposed* on account of his freedom, yet his capacity as *strength* (*robur*) is something that must be acquired, through the elevation of the moral *motive* [*Triebfeder*] (the representation of the law) through contemplation (*contemplatio*) of the dignity of the pure rational law in us, and at the same time also through practice (*exercitio*). (6:397)

In this passage Kant compares a bare capacity with a proficient capacity. Any human being has a capacity to "overcome all sensible opposing impulses," but a *strong* capacity to do so is something that must be acquired.[77]

This account of strength, as well as Kant's generally negative view of the inclinations (4:428; 5:118; 6:380), has led some to conclude that for Kant virtue amounts to continence or

[76] Inner freedom is "the capacity for self-constraint not by means of other inclinations, but by pure practical reason" (6:396).

[77] Stephen Engstrom argues that the capacity to overcome all sensible opposing impulses is nothing more than inner freedom, understood as self-constraint. He claims that there are two senses of inner freedom, just as there are two senses of strength in the passage cited above. Engstrom, "The Inner Freedom of Virtue," in *Kant's Metaphysics of Morals: Interpretive Essays*, 303-4.

control of one's unruly inclinations.[78] While it is true that Kant understands virtue as involving of self-constraint, as noted earlier he thinks that fighting against the inclinations is only a "preliminary exercise" (6:58). To understand this claim, it is first necessary to examine what other threats to virtue exist in addition to temptation from sensible nature.

Kant identifies affect (*Affekte*) and passion (*Leidenschaft*) as two general threats to virtue. Affects are episodic surges of feeling that frustrate one's rational powers, in particular the ability to reflect and consider matters carefully (7:252). Affects are like a storm that disrupts calm reflection before quickly subsiding. Kant also compares affect to "drunkenness that one sleeps off, although a headache follows afterward" (7:252). Affect involves a powerful surge of feeling, followed by shock and dismay at one's having been completely overcome by it. Examples of affects are anger, fright, grief, shame, and exuberant joy (7:254-6). Although his focus is on the way that affects can get in the way of virtue, Kant notes that some affects, such as laughing and crying, are "affects by which nature promotes health inly" (7:261).

Affect is a sudden, powerful, and brief surge of force, "like water that breaks through a dam" (7:252). Passion is different in that unlike affect it does not frustrate reflection and may in fact be strengthened by it. This makes passion "like a river that digs itself deeper and deeper into its bed" (7:252). Passion, for example, directs one to the apparent reasons why some person may be deserving of revenge, while filtering out and ignoring the reasons why this is not the case. Kant takes this kind of selective attention to be a feature of passion in general, defining passion as an "inclination that prevents reason from comparing it with the sum of all inclinations in

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[78] See Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53, and Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 172. For a rejection of this view see Anne Margaret Baxley, *Kant's Theory of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 79-83, and Stephen Engstrom, "The Inner Freedom of Virtue," 314-5.

respect to a certain choice" (7:261). Due to their form, the passions have nothing praiseworthy in them and are "without exception evil" (7:267).

The crucial difference between passion and affect is that passion—in its various forms—finds satisfaction in dominating other persons. Kant distinguishes between passions of nature and culture (7:267). The passions of nature concern freedom and sex, while the passions of culture concern honor, dominance, and greed.[79] The passions of nature aim at freedom and sexual gratification through domination, while the passions of culture aim at possessing influence over others through the acquisition of honor, political power, or resources.[80]

Since the passions have the appearance of reason, they pose a formidable threat to morality. Kant writes that passions are difficult to cure because the person in the grips of a passion typically does not want to be cured and "flees from the dominion of principles, by which alone a cure could occur" (7:266). Rational principles are the only cure since passion involves pursuit of a single inclination at the expense of all others, "making *part* of one's end the *whole*," which is to contradict "the formal principle of reason itself" (7:266). Though a mistake this serious should be obvious, a person in the grips of passion does not want to be cured precisely because he does not think he is sick. Those in the grips of a passion are likely to think that their passion really is the only important thing in the world.

Affect and passion represent very different sorts of threats to virtue, and therefore call for very different responses. The remedy to affect is Stoic "moral apathy" (*Affektlosigkeit*), which Kant understands as a kind of strength that is different from the strength as courage or resolve

[79] The passions of nature involve the two most powerful affects an animal being is subject to—the inclination for freedom and for sex. The passion for honor is not sincere love of honor, but pursuit of honor insofar as it affords one influence over others, so the mere semblance of honor is sufficient.
[80] Kant uses the word mania rather than desire when discussing the passions because the term desire suggests something that can be in principle satisfied. Mania, on the other hand, is insatiable (7:266).

discussed above: "The true strength of virtue is the mind at rest, with a considered and firm resolution to bring virtue's law into practice" (6:409). Moral apathy is the power to remain cool-headed in situations that normally give rise to affect. Kant writes: "in cases of moral apathy feelings arising from sensible impressions lose their influence on moral feeling only because respect for the law is more powerful than all such feelings together" (6:408). Much depends on the characterization of how feelings from sensible impressions *lose* their influence—do they lose their influence due to being overpowered by a stronger amount of force, or do they lose their influence by being deflected or weakened? The latter interpretation seems to be is a more accurate portrayal of what it would be for something to lose influence, and indeed not much strength (in the usual sense) is required to fight an opponent who has lost influence. Strength in the usual sense then is the ability to fight against something powerful, whereas apathy is the ability to prevent the opponent from gaining power in the first place.

Passion, on the other hand, requires fighting against the evil within oneself, specifically, the internal antagonism to rational principles that becomes masked through self-deception.[81] Despite Kant's agreement with the Stoics that virtue requires strength both in its usual form (combatting sensible nature) and as apathy, the presence of the passions—and in particular their source within oneself—suggests a deep disagreement between Kant and the Stoics regarding virtue. Kant writes:

> It was especially the Stoics who among the ancient moralists called attention to this through their watchword *virtue*, which designates courage and valor (in Greek as well as in Latin) and hence presupposes the presence of an enemy…. However, these valiant men mistook their enemy, who is not to be sought in the natural inclinations, which merely lack discipline… but is rather as it were an invisible enemy, one who hides behind reason and hence all the more dangerous. (6:57)

[81] The role of apathy in healing the passions seems to be somewhat minimal. At best apathy could be called for in healing the passions of nature, since those passions are related to affect.

The Stoics mistakenly thought that the human being possesses "an uncorrupted will" capable of "unhesitatingly incorporating these [moral] laws into its maxims" (6:58n). The Stoics recognized that the inclinations presented challenges to the pursuit of virtue, but without ascribing a "special positive principle (evil in itself)" to the human heart, they could only explain moral transgression as the result of an omission, or failure to combat the inclinations (6:59). The problem of course is that this transgression is also a violation of duty. On pain of circularity the cause of this transgression cannot be the inclinations, which Kant takes to vindicate his claim that the human being has an evil *Gesinnung*. The cause of this transgression, in other words, must instead be "in the first and inmost ground of the maxims which are in agreement with the inclinations" (6:59).

The result of the Stoics' mistake regarding the source of evil in human nature gives rise to two significant errors. Kant summarizes these errors in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The first error is the thought that the human being, lacking an evil *Gesinnung*, is capable of becoming fully virtuous in this lifetime (5:127). According to Kant, this state, understood as *holiness*, requires an infinite amount of time to achieve (5:83-4). The second and more significant error is the Stoic position that one should become detached from one's desires, a position that follows from the thesis that the inclinations themselves are evil. Kant writes:

> …but also and above all they would not let the second *component* of the highest good, namely happiness, hold as a special object of the human faculty of desire but made their *sage*, like a divinity in his consciousness of the excellence of his own person, quite independent of nature (with respect to his own contentment), exposing (*aussetzten*) him indeed to the ills of life but not subjecting (*unterwarfen*) him to them (at the same time representing him as also free from evil); and thus they really left out the second element in the highest good, namely, one's own happiness, placing it solely in acting and in contentment with one's personal worth and so including in it consciousness of one's moral cast of mind – though in this they could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature. (5:127)

Although the Stoics have a proper understanding of virtue as a courageous struggle against an enemy, they mistakenly identify this enemy as the inclinations. As a result, their ideal of the sage

can be said to be virtuous and content, but not happy. The sage's contentment must somehow be "independent of nature," as if one could merely be exposed but not subjected to the ills of life. Kant simply takes this view to be *prima facie* implausible, writing that the Stoic conception of happiness "could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature."

Unlike the Stoics, Kant's view is that our everyday conception of happiness is compatible with virtue. This helps explain why Kant can maintain that drunkenness is a vice without also holding that temperance is a virtue. Indeed, for Kant there are no corresponding virtues of, say, chastity, fasting, or temperance. Part of Kant's view here is related to his theory of negation. According to Kant all perfect duties to oneself are negative duties, or duties of omission.[82] But virtue and vice are related not as *logical opposites* (contradictories) but as *real opposites* (opposing forces) (6:384). The opposite of virtue is not vice, but simply lack of virtue. Although suicide, unnatural lust, gluttony, and drunkenness are vices, their corresponding opposites are not therefore virtues. In fact, Kant agrees with Hume's disdain for such 'virtues', referring to them as "monkish virtues," which amount to "self-torture and mortification of the flesh … not directed to virtue but rather to fantastically purging oneself of sin by imposing punishments on oneself" (6:485). Such so-called virtues are undertaken out of a sense of shame or guilt and do not promote a virtuous disposition. This is in keeping with Kant's view that there is nothing wrong with satisfying one's desires or acting from self-love, so long as this does not violate the moral law.

Kant nonetheless holds that perfect duties to oneself are part of virtue. Specifically, they "belong to the moral health of the human being … to the preservation of his nature in its perfection (as receptivity)" (6:419). Kant thus seems to think that although there are no

[82] Imperfect duties, which are positive duties or duties of commission, do admit of particular virtues. For instance, the two duties of virtue (or ends that are also duties) are the happiness of others and one's own perfection (6:385-6).

individual virtues corresponding to the vices of animal nature, avoiding the vices of animal nature promotes part of virtue which he calls moral health. But what it is less clear what Kant means by moral health.

The instrumental account of the duties to oneself can easily explain moral health. Denis, for example, defines moral health as preservation of one's ability to reason practically, either permanently (suicide) or temporarily (gluttony and drunkenness).[83] Avoiding the vices of animal nature promotes virtue insofar as the ability to reason practically is required for virtue. But on a teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being it is not clear how moral health, understood as the purposive exercise of certain natural impulses, should be understood as part of virtue. To be sure, the purposive exercise of the impulses of nature preserves our animality, which is part of the predisposition to the good. But it is still unclear how this is related to virtue or *moral* health.

I claim that moral health has to do with obeying the duties to oneself as an animal being in the following way. To being, Kant's considered view is that fighting the inclinations is merely a "preliminary exercise," since the threat posed by inclination is the manifestation of the more basic dynamics of the propensity to evil in human nature. As discussed earlier, a crucial stage in Kant's account of evil is the way in which human beings acquire the concept of pleasure and begin to take pleasure (rather than the object of an appetite) as that for the sake of which they act. This is particularly dangerous because human beings are apt to consider the concept of pleasure in general as the natural object of an appetite. The most dangerous part of this procedure the representation of an act of one's free choice as natural.[84] The true object of our appetites is hidden, and this act of self-deception gives rise to the vices of animal nature by the creation of a

[83] Lara Denis, "Kant's Ethics and Duties to Oneself," 326.
[84] Sussman, "Perversity of the Heart," 167-8.

new end: pursuit of pleasure as such. Kant describes this process as the illusion of "taking what is subjective in the motivating cause for objective" (7:274). The perversion of the impulses of nature thus involves something akin to the transformation of an affect into a passion. Indeed, Kant describes this illusion as "apt to become passionate in the highest degree" (7:275). Just as passion obscures the rest of one's inclinations by representing one inclination as dominant, a singular focus on pleasure encroaches on all of one's particular desires. On my view, moral health is the recovery from this form of self-deception which itself was what gave rise to the perversion of animal nature. Recognizing this mistake affords a healthier relation to desire. Moral health is not a return to an animalistic orientation to the appetites, since this is not possible for a rational being, but is instead an undoing of our self-deception as it relates to the natural appetites. Specifically, this involves a more honest reckoning with what is natural and what is artificial in one's desires. This is related to the antagonism between morality and nature that afflicts human beings (8:116-7). Duties to oneself as an animal being can help remedy this antagonism (though not completely) because they represent a moral command that is tied to the satisfaction of the natural appetites. Obeying the duties to oneself helps show that morality and nature are more closely aligned than they seem.

I should be clear that my position is not that obeying the natural teleology of the natural appetites guarantees that one will no longer be under the spell of this illusion or self-deception. Still, obeying the natural teleology of the natural appetites are of great importance for accomplishing these difficult tasks. This is because limiting one's maxims that involve the natural appetites in the ways dictated by natural teleology makes clear that one cannot merely take the object of these appetites to be pleasure, since at least in some cases this will rule out the possibility of achieving the natural purpose. And if this is the case, then one must recognize that

the general concept of pleasure cannot be the natural object of these appetites. This is because the plausibility of any teleological account depends on the fact that natural creatures can satisfy the natural purpose of the impulse of nature simply by pursuing the natural object of the impulse of nature.[85]

One way in which the duties to oneself as an animal being, understood teleologically, are related to moral health is by demonstrating that natural teleology is incompatible with the thought that the object of the natural appetites is the abstract concept of pleasure. In this way the duties to oneself as an animal being should not be taken merely as restrictions on when one can and cannot satisfy an appetite, although this is one thing they do. Natural teleology shows that it is in fact not natural to regard the object the appetites as the concept of pleasure itself. In this way the duties to oneself as an animal being refocus one's attention on appetite satisfaction rather than simply experiencing as much pleasure as possible. Insofar as this helps chip away at a particular piece of self-deception this is morally good. But it is also good insofar as it affords us a healthier understanding of our appetites, and in particular the objects of those appetites. Rational creatures are capable of coming up with all sorts of novel ends, and it can seem that the concept of pleasure itself is the ultimate object of non-moral choice. But this obsession with pleasure as something detached from particular objects or specific desires runs the risk of dissociating one from those objects and desires. Moral health is the cultivation of a virtuous soul

[85] This point might explain why Kant seems to waver between two different natural purposes in his account of the sexual appetite. On the one hand, this appetite must aim at preservation of the species. On the other hand, the object of the sexual appetite is different for different people. Many people simply find themselves attracted to one sex over the other, and this point is independent of the fact that one could very well achieve sexual gratification from persons of either sex. Homosexual sex is therefore not necessarily an abandonment of the natural object of the impulse of nature, even if cannot realize the preservation of the species. Masturbatory fantasy, on the other hand, does amount to abandoning the natural object of the impulse of nature, since it represents the natural object of the sexual appetite as pleasure, rather than as another person.

through the elimination of self-deception. As teleological, moral health also represents a state in which one obtains a healthy relation to one's appetites.

Of course, this is not the whole of moral health—since my focus is on the duties to oneself as an animal being, I have only touched on the part of moral health that concerns animal nature. The duties to oneself in general are supposed to promote moral health, and Kant claims that there a fundamental relationship between duties to oneself and self-knowledge, writing that self-knowledge is the first command of all duties to oneself (6:441). But why does Kant think that self-knowledge has a special relation to duties to oneself? Isn't self-knowledge important regardless of whether the object of a duty is oneself or others?

Kant holds that self-knowledge is particularly important for duties to oneself because, he claims, self-knowledge will "dispel *fanatical* contempt for oneself as a human being (for the whole human race)" (6:441). Understanding the depths of the human heart allows one to see the true enemy of virtue, which is not some feature of human nature, but an exercise of free choice. There is a predisposition to good in human nature and one should be careful not to hold part of this predisposition to good in contempt. This is the mistake of the Stoics and others who praise what Kant calls "monkish virtues" such as chastity and temperance (6:485). But there is another concern that has to do not with despising the natural inclinations but with regarding artificial inclinations as nature. Kant explains what he means by self-knowledge:

> This command is 'know (scrutinize, fathom) yourself,' not in terms of your natural perfection (your fitness or unfitness for all sorts of discretionary or even commanded ends) but rather in terms of your moral perfection in relation to your duty. That is, know your heart – whether it is good or evil, whether the source of your actions is pure or impure, and what can be imputed to you as belonging originally to the *substance* of a human being or as derived (acquired or developed) and belonging to your moral condition. (6:441)

As we have seen, self-deception regarding what is and what is not part of our natural predisposition lies at the root of the propensity to evil in human beings. I have focused on the particular effort to regard the general concept of pleasure as the object of desire because my interest is in the duties to oneself as an animal being. Self-deception allows evil to become grafted onto the predisposition to good in human nature, so self-knowledge is the beginning of the acquisition of a good character: "Only the descent into the hell of self-cognition can pave the way to godliness" (6:441). The duties to oneself are summarized as commands to preserve yourself in the perfection of your nature. Self-knowledge allows us to recognize the perfection of one's nature, and to remove the artificial parts masquerading as natural.

VIII. Conclusion

I have argued that there is at least a place for duties to oneself as an animal being, understood teleologically, within Kant's system. Kant understands animal nature as part of the predisposition to good in human nature, and the complexities of his account of evil are due to the fact that evil cannot simply be attributed to our nature. Kant's account of virtue reflects the thought that desire satisfaction is a good and healthy part of human life. Though Kant shares much in common with the Stoics, he does not agree with the Stoic claim that one should try to become radically detached from one's desires in a way that would jeopardize our happiness. In particular, Kant refrains from identifying the logical opposites of the vices of animal nature as virtues. Although gluttony and drunkenness are vices, fasting and temperance are *not* virtues. While Kant's account of human nature is generally accommodating to the teleological interpretation of the duties to oneself I have offered, it remains to be seen whether Kant's moral theory can accommodate the appeal to natural teleology. I turn now to the question of whether

the human being, an autonomous rational being, is in fact the sort of thing that is appropriate to evaluate using teleological standards.

CHAPTER 3: ENJOYMENT, PAIN, AND ANIMAL NATURE

In the previous chapter I presented a teleological account of the duties to oneself as an animal being. In this chapter I turn my attention to the normative status of natural teleology, particularly the worry that natural teleology cannot play a role in Kant's moral theory. The problem is to understand how Kant could claim that considerations of natural teleology have normative authority for a free (rational) being. Since there are many possible explanations of Kant's appeal to natural teleology, I want to take a moment to say some things in defense of my approach in this chapter.

Perhaps an obvious explanation is to attribute Kant's appeal to natural teleology to biases inherited from 18th century Prussian society or to the influence of Pietism. While this is possible, it seems unlikely that Kant would continue to endorse arguments that appear to be inconsistent with fundamental aspects of his moral theory, especially considering that references to natural teleology are not tucked away in footnotes but instead play an important role in arguments that appear throughout Kant's ethical writings.[86] A similar, more direct, suggestion is that Kant's views on natural teleology are motivated in part by his homophobia, evidence of which consists not just in the fact that he thinks homosexual sex is wrong, but particularly in the way he talks about homosexuality and the status of the vice of unnatural sex in particular. I don't deny that Kant clearly seemed to have problematic attitudes about sexual orientation, gender, and race. But it's not clear that these prejudices actually served as premises in Kant's arguments. Again, this

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[86] I want to be clear that I am not denying the possibility that Kant may have been homophobic, sexist, or racist, and my goal is not to apologize, defend, or obscure Kant's problematic take on these topics. It may turn out that Kant's personal biases do play some role here, but it would be surprising, I think, if it manifested itself in such obviously mistaken ways.

would be a fairly obvious mistake to make, and my goal is to avoid attributing such a mistake to Kant unless it is clear that there is no better alternative.

I will argue that Kant's appeal to natural teleology is in fact not in tension with his moral theory. First, Kant invokes natural teleology as a standard for actions where one seeks to satisfy a natural appetite. Second, Kant thinks that pleasure and displeasure are teleological in nature, claiming that they represent the promotion or hindrance of one's life. Natural appetite satisfaction, as a species of pleasure, already has a teleology internal to it.

I will begin by explaining the role of purposiveness within Kant's philosophy. First, I discuss Kant's account of teleological judgment from the *Critique of Judgment*, which concerns the objective purposiveness of artifacts and organisms. I explain why Kant thinks we must judge organisms as purposive, and I defend an account of the normativity that is involved in these judgments. Then I proceed examine some objections to Kant's appeal to natural teleology, which I broadly characterize as metaphysical and normative in nature. The metaphysical objection concerns the appropriateness of applying teleological judgments to human beings (in contrast to organisms). The normative objection concerns the worry that natural teleology is incompatible with human freedom, and Kant's method more generally. The solution, I propose, has to do with Kant's thought that pleasure and displeasure possess an internal teleology. As something internal to pleasure and displeasure, natural teleology is not something imposed from the outside onto a free being. I finish by considering some objections.

I. Natural Teleology in Kant's Philosophy

As discussed in the previous chapter, Kant appeals to natural teleology in an ethical context as far back as the *Groundwork*. There he invokes the teleological principle, which says that for any living being "there will be found no instrument for some end other than what is also

most appropriate to that end and best adapted to it" (4:395). The principle appears in the context of Kant's argument that the purpose of reason is not to make one happy, since there is something else that is much better suited for that task, namely, instinct. Kant says that this principle is an assumption one must make when reflecting on the "natural predispositions of an organized being, i.e. one organized purposively for life" (4:395).

The idea is that the natural predispositions of an organism will not contain redundant or sub-optimal parts with respect to some end. These parts may be organs, but Kant is explicit that these parts may also be understood as parts of a predisposition, such as the natural appetites (self-love, sexual desire, desire for food and drink, and the social drive). Just as organs have natural purposes, so do the natural appetites (self-preservation, preservation of the species, preservation of the capacity to enjoy life, and community with others). In normal circumstances, satisfaction of these impulses brings about the flourishing of the individual and the species, at least considered as a natural being.

Though it is somewhat clear what Kant intends this principle to do in the context of his argument in the *Groundwork*, it is nonetheless puzzling. For starters, there is scant defense of it as something required for our understanding of nature. Kant does not give a more thorough account of the role of natural teleology in our cognition of nature until the third Critique.

A. Purposiveness in the *Critique of Judgment*

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant distinguishes between three different forms of purposiveness: logical purposiveness, formal purposiveness involved in judgments of beauty, and objective purposiveness involved in judgments about organisms. Logical purposiveness is a way of regarding nature that makes possible a lawlike or systematic experience of empirical

diversity. Kant describes logical purposiveness, or the "transcendental principle of the power of judgement" in the following passage from the First Introduction as:

> a subjectively necessary transcendental presupposition that such a disturbingly unbounded diversity of empirical laws and heterogeneity of natural forms does not pertain to nature, rather that nature itself, through the affinity of particular laws under more general ones, qualifies for an experience, as an empirical system. (20:209)

Kant later says that the following popular sayings all express the basic idea of logical purposiveness: "nature takes the shortest route; she does nothing in vain; she makes no leap in the manifold of forms (*continuum formarum*); she is rich in species but sparing with genera, etc." (20:210).[87] It can seem as if the ascription of logical purposiveness to nature is something like an assumption that nature is amenable to our cognition, or the hope that nature is as we think or judge it to be. But the principle is more than just wishful thinking. Logical purposiveness must be ascribed to nature because only in this way can experience and empirical cognition be possible for us.[88] In the absence of the presupposition of logical purposiveness, one's reflection on nature would not merely fail to agree with our cognitive endeavors, but would be "arbitrary and blind" (20:212). That is, without logical purposiveness it is not as if our endeavors to understand nature would merely be unsuccessful—such endeavors would not be possible in the first place.

Judgments of beauty or taste involve formal purposiveness. Judgments of taste are occasioned by something in nature (a flower) or something produced by a designer (a work of

[87] Compare to the published introduction, where Kant again refers to popular statements of the transcendental principle of the power of judgment "found often enough in the course of this science, but only scattered about, as pronouncements of metaphysical wisdom… 'Nature takes the shortest way' (*lex parsimoniae*); 'it makes no leaps, either in the sequence of its changes or in the juxtaposition of specifically different forms' (*lex continui in natura*); 'the great multiplicity of its empirical laws is nevertheless unity under a few principles' (*principia prater necessitatem non sunt multiplicanda*); and so on" (5:182).
[88] See Rachel Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology: An Interpretation of the 'Critique of Judgment'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40-43. See also Hannah Ginsborg, "Lawfulness without a Law" in *The Normativity of Nature: Essays on Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), especially section IV.

art). To say that something is beautiful is to feel pleasure in response to a representation of a certain object. The special character of judgments of taste is that, unlike judgments of agreeableness, judgments of taste involve a kind of pleasure that hold for oneself and *should* hold for all others. Another important feature of judgments of beauty is that unlike the agreeable, judgments of beauty are disinterested (5:204-05; 5:207). This means that such judgments have nothing to do with prior desires or values. In other words, the judgment that something is beautiful must be independent of what one desires or wills.

What makes something beautiful is not that it satisfies a desire, which shows just how unique this form of pleasure is. Unlike the good it does not involve the use of rules or concepts, and unlike the agreeable it is disinterested. At the same time, it is a feeling of pleasure that is universally valid. Kant characterizes pleasure in the beautiful as an awareness of formal purposiveness. This pleasure follows from the awareness of the purposiveness of one's cognitive powers: "The consciousness of the merely formal purposiveness in the play of the cognitive powers of the subject in the case of a representation through which an object is given is the pleasure itself…" (5:222). This anticipates the claim that formal purposiveness is "purposiveness without a purpose" (5:226). Formal purposiveness is normative: when one judges something to be beautiful one *demands* the agreement of others and "rebukes them if they judge otherwise" (5:213). Thus, while judgments of beauty do not involve the use of rules or concepts, they do involve the cognitive faculties. In a judgment of beauty, the understanding and the imagination are in harmony, characterized by Kant as a "free play" (5:217). Though the judgment of beauty is not a cognitive judgement, its normativity has a basis in one's cognitive powers.[89] Kant's way of putting this is to say that formal purposiveness is kind of "lawfulness without a law" (5:241).

[89] See Hannah Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," in *The Normativity of Nature*, 235

B. Objective Purposiveness and Artifacts

Before I discuss the objective purposiveness involved in teleological judgments, I want to note that the relationship between the different forms of purposiveness in the *Critique of Judgment* is controversial. Paul Guyer, for example, argues that formal purposiveness and objective purposiveness are distinct concepts of purposiveness.[90] In the case of artifacts and organisms, purposiveness is associated with at least the appearance of design, whereas aesthetic objects are purposive for our cognitive capacities. On the other hand, Hannah Ginsborg and Rachel Zuckert argue in favor of a unified account of purposiveness by interpreting both judgments of beauty and judgments about organisms in terms of purposiveness without a purpose, or purposiveness as such.[91] The question of whether there is a unified concept of purposiveness underlying these three forms is complicated and I can't settle it here, but as I will explain I think it is problematic to understand their possible unity as Ginsborg and Zuckert do, namely, as formal purposiveness or purposiveness without a purpose.

Kant characterizes formal purposiveness as a "lawfulness without a law" which highlights the cognitive nature of such judgments, despite the fact that that they do not involve bringing an object under a concept. Thus, aesthetic judgments involve only the *form* of purposiveness. In contrast, objective purposiveness is characterized as the "lawfulness of the contingent" (5:404). Unlike aesthetic judgments, teleological judgments do involve bringing

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[90] See Paul Guyer, *Kant's Critique of Taste*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 218. Kant's general discussion of general purposiveness in §10 is thus "misleading" and "obscures [Kant's] fundamental idea" according to Guyer: *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 417n39.

[91] Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 232, 235. Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 78. Zuckert and Ginsborg both hold that to regard an organism as purposive without a purpose is to regard the organism 'as if' designed by an intentional agent. But there are important differences with how each unpacks the notion of design in this context. Ginsborg thinks of design in terms of a thing's being produced by rational causes, whereas Zuckert thinks of design in terms of a thing's being produced by rational causes *for* some use or purpose. Thus, Zuckert thinks that Kant actually has two conceptions of purposiveness, as it refers to the formation of an object, and the ends that the object serves. Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 80-1.

objects under concepts, such as judging whether an organism is good or defective, or whether an artifact is useful. The trouble with respect to teleological judgments is to understand how something contingent can be brought under laws.

Before delving into teleological judgments, it is important to examine more closely the concept of purposiveness in general. Kant says that a purpose or end "is the object of a concept insofar as the latter is regarded as the cause of the former (the real ground of its possibility)" (5:220). Despite this convoluted definition, the idea is somewhat intuitive. Take an artifact, such as a table. The purpose of the table is to provide a flat surface for holding things, and this purpose is the cause of the carpenter's making the table.[92] The purpose is a concept—the concept of a table, for example—that causes or leads to the production of an object capable of fulfilling that purpose: "the causality of a concept with regard to its object is purposiveness (*forma finalis*)" (5:220). Purposiveness not only initiates but also governs this procedure, since the design and construction of the object is governed by this concept. The table should have a flat and even surface, its legs should be equal lengths to prevent it from wobbling, and so on. The purpose of the table provides guidelines for table-making. The purpose of the table governs or determines the form of the table, but not its contingent properties (i.e. color, and to some extent the material out of which it is made). The purpose of the table identifies conditions for what counts as a table and also enables specification of what makes for a better or worse table.

In the familiar context of artifacts, purposes are invoked in cases where "not merely the cognition of an object, but the object itself (its form or its existence) as an effect is thought of as

[92] Kant holds that the purpose of the artifact is the efficient cause of its being built. This of course presupposes the desire of the builder to accomplish whatever the purpose of the artifact is—it's not as if the mere thought of any purpose entails its creation. In Kant's example of the house, it is assumed that the carpenter has a desire to make money from renting a property. Given this desire, and the fact that the purpose of the house is to make money from rent, the purpose (making money from rent) causes the carpenter to build the house.

possible only through a concept of the latter" (5:220). The purpose, or end, explains why some object exists with the particular form it has. The carpenter's activity is caused by the purpose of the thing to be made. The carpenter's actions of cutting legs and fixing them to a flat surface can be explained by reference to the purpose of the table.

The purpose of the table thus enables evaluation of the object that is produced. A good table is one that agrees with the purpose of providing a good surface for holding things. It is important to note that to call something purposive is not to evaluate it either as good or bad *in general*. To call something purposive is to mark it as something to be evaluated with respect to some particular end.[93] I can design something that I want to be a table, and thus it is purposive in some minimal sense, without it actually being good for that end. Even defective tables are understood with respect to a purpose, insofar as their existence and form are due to the representation a that served as the grounds of the object's production. Defective artifacts are designed, but either they are designed according to bad rules, or the rules are fine but have not been well-followed. Thus, a good table is not merely purposive, but must agree with its purpose (the purpose of providing a flat surface to hold objects), and a bad table is one that disagrees with this purpose or is *contrapurposive* (as opposed to merely nonpurposive).

Artifacts are an easy case because the very concept of an artifact implies a designer. But we also judge organisms as purposive, even though we know that organisms are not produced by a designer. Kant thus seems to claim that we may judge an object to be purposive just because it appears *as if* it were designed:

[93] When one judges an artifact to be defective (contrapurposive) one does not judge it to be defective in general, or defective as an artifact. There is no limit to the ends a human being could have, and even a defective table may be good for *some* purpose. This is why I am hesitant to talk about defect in terms of nonpurposiveness. The nonpurposive is that which does not invite normative evaluation, not a class of defect. Consider Kant's case of a stone found at an ancient burial site the "purposiveness the end of which one does not know" (5:236). One can evaluate a non-purposive object, for example by selecting the nicest looking stone, but this is already to understand the stone as purposive in some way; perhaps this stone looks very nice on my shelf.

> An object or a state of mind or even an action, however, even if its possibility does not necessarily presuppose the representation of an end, is called purposive merely because its possibility can only be explained and conceived by us insofar as we assume as its ground a causality in accordance with ends, i.e., a will that has arranged it so in accordance with the representation of a certain rule. Purposiveness can thus exist without an end, insofar as we do not place the causes of this form in a will, but can still make the explanation of its possibility conceivable to ourselves only by deriving it from a will. (5:220)

Anticipating an argument he will make later in the Critique of Teleological Judgment, in this passage Kant suggests that although the *possibility* of some things do not presuppose the representation of an purpose, such things are purposive because we cannot *explain* or *conceive* of them except by presuming them to be arranged in accordance with the representation of a rule, i.e. by a will.[94] Organic nature, Kant argues, cannot be understood as lawlike according to mechanical causes. For example, the construction of an organ as formed for some purpose cannot be understood as lawlike according to mechanical causes, since the construction of an organ with respect to mechanical laws is contingent. But before I explain Kant's account of organisms as purposive, I want to pause to consider the status of these rules. That is, what is the normativity of teleological judgment, and how should the imperatival status of such rules be understood? This will in turn help motivate Kant's view that teleological laws are necessary and sufficient for our understanding organic nature.

C. The Normativity of Teleological Judgment

Ginsborg argues that the normativity of teleological judgment can be understood as the normativity of design. Imagine an architect who designs a blueprint for a building. A contractor who is to construct the building looks at the blueprint and notices that there is a mistake in the

[94] As this last clause suggests, this minimal sense of purposiveness says *something* by way of explaining the object, even if one does not know what particular rule was used in the production of this object. Following Ginsborg, the minimal sense of purposiveness is just to identify this object as the sort of thing to be evaluated, even if one isn't sure of the rule by which such evaluation would occur.

design; something about the building is unsafe. The proposed building does not agree with the concept of a building, so in this sense the architect has designed a bad building. Nonetheless, Ginsborg thinks that there is a sense in which the architect's blueprint represents an 'ought' that she takes to be exemplary of the normativity of teleology: "Even if she thinks the plan is a bad one, which would result in an unsafe and hence rationally undesirable building, she still recognizes it as specifying how the building ought—in the thin sense—to be."[95] This thin sense of ought, according to Ginsborg, is not the ought of theoretical reason, it is not a moral ought, nor is it the ought of practical means-end rationality. For Ginsborg, the normativity of teleology is the normativity of design, like the normativity of a blueprint, which is independent not only of the moral value of the object designed (a bomb, for example), but also independent of whether the object designed agrees with its concept. She claims, then, that something can be as it ought to be since it accords with its design, even if the thing fails to agree with the concept that governs objects of that kind, that is, even if the building is useless or defective in virtue of being unsafe: "... we can recognize that something ought to be the case without ascribing any value to it."[96] Thus Ginsborg identifies the normativity of teleology with the mere purposiveness discussed earlier. To say that something is merely purposive is to recognize it as if it were produced for *some* end, but it stops short of judging it as good or bad with respect to that end.[97]

As I argued before, the normativity of teleology should not be understood as mere purposiveness. Although mere purposiveness identifies a sense in which an object is at it ought to be, I think there is a stronger sense of normativity associated with teleology, namely, something's agreeing or failing to agree with its purpose. Ginsborg confuses the condition of

[95] Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 251.
[96] Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 253.
[97] The epistemic uncertainty is due to a lack of access to the actual rule (blueprint) that governed the production of the artifact. Kant makes a similar point in the example of a stone tool found at an ancient burial site.

normative evaluation (purposiveness) with the normative evaluation itself (agreement with a purpose and contrapurposiveness). But if Ginsborg's account of the normativity of teleology is too thin, what is the right account?

One model Ginsborg rejects is the model of practical means-ends rationality, though she qualifies this by admitting that the model of practical means-ends rationality is accurate in the case of artifacts. It is reasonable, she thinks, that when we talk about how the object ought to be, we do so by reference to the concept of the thing—a good building is one that, among other things, is safe. Thus there is something practically irrational about a designer who fails to produce something that agrees with its purpose, assuming that the mistake here is not one of theoretical reason.[98] She argues, however, that this analysis is implausible in the case of organisms as a whole.[99] Practical means-ends rationality can govern the production of artifacts, she supposes, because they are tailored for particular ends. Organisms, however, do not have particular ends, and so the appeal to practical means-ends rationality doesn't work. The only other option is theoretical reason, but this also does not work because, according to Ginsborg, there is nothing irrational about an imagined designer who designs horseshoe crabs with three or five pairs of legs rather than four.[100] Artifacts are created for very specific ends, making it easy to evaluate whether a particular artifact is good or defective. The maker of a hammer has a reason for making the hammer out of metal and not glass (assuming the purpose of the hammer is to drive nails, and not to be an art object). But organisms cannot be evaluated according to practical means-ends rationality, nor can organisms be evaluated by the standards of theoretical rationality. Organisms are merely 'as if' designed, and this is part of why Ginsborg settles on a

[98] Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 250.
[99] Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 251.
[100] This is a slightly misleading way to frame the issue, as I will explain later, since it confuses the species-purpose with the general purpose of organisms.

thin understanding of the normativity of teleology as mere purposiveness. The evaluation of artifacts and organs are governed by particular purposes, but it is not clear what, if any, concepts govern organisms in general.[101]

I agree that it isn't obvious, simply upon reflection, what the purpose of a horseshoe crab, or any other organism, is. Although we can consider particular species as having ends in some sense, I will argue that species-ends are more a matter of taxonomic classification than normative evaluation. So, we are looking in the wrong place, so to speak, if we try to determine the purpose of a particular species. In what follows I will give a more robust characterization of the normativity of teleological judgment. It's worth noting that Ginsborg does not disagree that there is a more robust characterization of the normativity of teleological judgment, but she does not pursue it because she is after a unified account of purposiveness that works for both aesthetic and teleological judgment. Again, the unity of these forms of purposiveness is outside the scope of this chapter, and in what follows I will only consider teleological purposiveness, or purposiveness *with* a purpose.[102]

Ginsborg rightly points out a difference between possible modes of the evaluation of artifacts and the evaluation of organisms. But Kant is clear that artifacts are merely an analogy to organisms. Artifacts are ends of practical rationality, whereas organisms are natural ends. In contrast to the evaluation of artifacts, which is relative to the particular purpose or end of the designer, the evaluation of organisms is through reference to the purpose or end of the organism in general. The potential ends of practical rationality are limitless, which means that evaluation

[101] Zuckert gives this sort of argument in favor of the claim that organisms are purposiveness without a purpose. *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 81.

[102] In her pursuit of a unified understanding of aesthetic and teleological purposiveness, Ginsborg is careful to separate out the features unique to these respective forms of purposiveness while highlighting what they have in common. It is odd then that she takes purposiveness without a purpose as the model of purposiveness in general, whereas Kant offers this characterization of purposiveness as the model of aesthetic purposiveness in particular. Ginsborg, "Kant on Aesthetic and Biological Purposiveness," 244-5.

of an artifact depends on the precise purpose or use of the artifact. Natural ends, by contrast, can be characterized only in general terms. Though the purpose is vastly different in these cases, I propose that both organisms and artifacts should be evaluated with respect to their purpose. The challenge in the case of organisms is to understand just what a natural purpose or end is.

II. Organisms as Natural Ends

The aim of the Analytic of Teleological Judgment is to show that organisms are natural ends. This argument can be thought of as having two stages. In the first stage Kant argues that organisms must be judged purposively. Kant is here distinguishing the organic from inorganic matter. Organisms display a unity that cannot be explained as *necessary* according to mechanical laws. This justifies the use of final causes rather than efficient causes in explaining the organic. The second stage in the argument concerns the difference between organisms and artifacts. Having established that organisms must be judged purposively, Kant then explains how the purposive nature of organisms is different from the purposive nature of artifacts. This issue can be thought of as the question of how natural ends are possible, or how there can be purposiveness absent a designer who produces an object in accordance with a rule. Most important for my purposes is a related problem of how an organism can be conceptually understood and evaluated—what is the concept with respect to which we evaluate organisms?

Kant claims that we must judge organisms teleologically: organisms "can only be conceived by us in accordance with the concept of final causes" (5:380). The thought is that mechanical explanation via efficient causes fails to adequately explain organisms, and so in order to explain organisms we must invoke another kind of cause, namely, final causation. In a well-known example, Kant writes:

For if one adduces, e.g., the structure of a bird, the hollowness of its bones, the placement

> of its wings for movement and of its tail for steering, etc., one says that given the mere *nexus effectivus* in nature, without the help of a special kind of causality, namely that of ends (*nexus finalus*), this is all in the highest degree contingent: i.e., that nature, considered as a mere mechanism, could have formed itself in a thousand different ways without hitting precisely upon the unity in accordance with such a rule... (5:360).

Mechanical laws cannot explain the defining characteristic of organisms, which is the unity of diverse, heterogeneous parts. As Kant says, the unity of organisms is merely contingent according to efficient causes. The specific arrangement of the parts as a unity is only one of many possible ways that the bird could have been formed by efficient causes. But if this is the case, then we cannot explain organisms, in particular their unity, according to laws. Teleological judgment allows us to bring "appearances under rules where the laws of causality about the mere mechanisms of nature do not suffice" (5:360). There cannot be an explanation of organisms (as unities) according to mechanical laws, there cannot be "a Newton who could make comprehensible the generation of a blade of grass," and so an explanation of organisms in terms of laws must look to final causes rather than efficient causes (5:400). Although efficient causes could explain the formation of individual parts in isolation, they cannot explain the unity of the parts in relation to the whole organism. Only teleological judgment makes possible cognition of organisms according to laws.

I want to stop and say a bit more about the unity of purposive objects. Unlike inorganic nature, organisms have a special kind of unity. If one cuts a rock from a large chunk of granite, the small rock is still a piece of granite. The small piece is explained and understood in exactly the same way whether or not it is a part of the larger rock.[103] This is not a claim about the metaphysical nature of the rock, but about its basic observable properties, activities, or functions.

[103] One might object that a rock cut from a mountain is not itself a mountain. But the point here is not that inorganic nature cannot participate in part-whole relations. Rather, the point is that the parts of inorganic wholes are the same whether they are considered as part of the whole or as separated from the whole.

The small rock is understood in exactly the same way as the larger chunk because the parts of inorganic matter are independent of the whole. *If* inorganic things are considered as wholes, they are so considered merely as sums of their parts. Thus, there is no rule whereby inorganic material objects are unified, and the small piece of rock is the same thing that it was before it was removed from the larger chunk.[104] On the other hand, to use an example from Aristotle, a hand removed from a body is a hand in name only. The account of what a hand is changes when it is no longer part of a unified whole, since it can no longer be considered in terms of its relation to other parts and to the whole organism.[105] Likewise, the character of the whole changes when it loses a part—a watch missing a gear or a body missing a hand may lack its characteristic unity and thus be defective (unless we instantly regrew our hands the way a starfish can regenerate an appendage). Unlike inorganic matter, the parts of organisms and artifacts are understood as dependent on (or for the sake of) the whole.

Purposive objects are also a unity of diverse parts. Purposive objects do not merely possess a unity, since even inorganic material objects can be said to be unified in some sense. The unity of purposive objects is, as Zuckert says, a unity of "particular, contingent, diverse parts."[106] By contrast, inorganic matter can be understood as unified in terms of laws that represent inorganic nature as homogenous (namely, mechanical laws and the concept of matter). The great advantage is that this allows for the description of material objects in mathematical terms, as obeying physical laws understood as efficient causes. To the extent that they are unified, inorganic material objects are unified in virtue of their homogenous parts. As previously

[104] Kant writes that "matter … by itself can provide no determinate unity of composition… (5:377).
[105] This is not to say that a disembodied hand cannot be studied or understood. But it cannot be understood as a hand, at least not absent background knowledge about the role of the hand as used for various tasks such as holding or grasping objects. The same holds for the parts of artifacts. A gear is not the same when it is separated from a watch, although this point can be obscured by the fact that its form and material composition make it difficult to see as something other than its potential use. But this is of course to see the gear as part of a watch, as part of a whole.
[106] Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 109.

noted, this does not provide a non-arbitrary rule for identifying inorganic wholes. Organisms and artifacts, however, are taken as unities in virtue of their diverse, contingent features. Consider an example of a naturally occurring 'artifact,' such as a stone of a certain shape and size such that it functions as a perfect grinding stone. The stone is naturally occurring, but insofar as it is used as an artifact, it is so evaluated in virtue of its contingent, diverse features. What makes it a good grinding stone is not its homogenous material composition. Rather, it is a good grinding stone because it has a certain heft, two shorter, rounded sides, and two longer, flat sides. If part of it were broken off, the part would still be the same thing in virtue of its material properties (it would still be a piece of stone), but it would no longer have the right heft or shape to serve as a grinding stone. Purposive objects are not mere unities, but unities of the diverse.

It is important to note that the contrast between mechanical explanation and teleological explanation is not to deny the appropriateness of ever using mechanical explanation by efficient causes for artifacts or organisms. Efficient causes should be used in order to explain how the bird flies, or how the gears in the watch turn, for example. The idea is not that purposiveness is somehow needed to explain the behavior of an object in flight. Rather, purposiveness is necessary to explain the *unity* of the parts as an integrated whole. The crucial difference between mechanical and teleological explanation is that the former is appropriate in cases where the (homogenous) parts of the object under consideration are independent of the whole, whereas the latter is appropriate in cases where there are diverse parts that are dependent on the whole. If we were to discover an apparent organism composed entirely of homogeneous parts, an explanation of its unity would not need to appeal to teleological principles.[107] But then it would not be purposive, and so not an organism but a very close imitation.

[107] And presumably this thing would not in fact be an organism, since it would not seem to be internally purposive but merely operating in accordance with mechanical laws.

Artifacts and organisms are special kinds of unities. I will now turn to the difference between artifacts and organisms. One way of approaching the special characteristic of organisms is through Kant's distinction between relative purposiveness and internal purposiveness (5:367). Relative purposiveness is a relation of benefit, and the thought is that we should not judge relations of benefit as truly purposive. Such relations may be called useful when they benefit human beings, e.g. river deltas as a productive land for the growth of crops, and advantageous when they benefit other creatures, e.g. sand as a favorable environment for the growth of fir trees. But we can understand the possibility of a river delta without invoking the (relative) end of it serving as a good environment for growing crops. This is in contrast to the parts of organisms, the existence of which can be conceived as possible *only* as dependent on an end. Artifacts also depend on an end, in that the artifact would not exist if it were not for the designer producing it for some end (a final cause).

Purposiveness is thus not a relation of benefit, but a certain kind of relation between cause and effect. In purposive objects, the effect (the end) serves as cause. In the case of teleological judgments about organisms we attribute a special kind of causality to nature, namely final causes. Again, we saw that Kant characterizes purposiveness in general as "the causality of a concept with regard to its object is purposiveness (*forma finalis*)" (5:220). This makes it seem as if the concept of the organism serves as the cause of the organism, in a sense analogous to the way in which the concept of the watch, for example, serves as the cause of the watchmaker's production of a watch. In the case of artifacts this makes perfect sense, as the end is something in the mind of the designer. Organisms, however, are not regarded as ends or concepts in the mind of a designer.

A natural end (as opposed to an end that is the product of design) is thus "cause and effect of itself" (5:370). Unlike artifacts, which depend on a designer, organisms are *self-generating*, hence, internally purposive. Organisms generate themselves in three ways, yielding three characteristic features of natural ends. Kant illustrates these three characteristic forms of self-generation with the example of a tree:

> First, a tree generates another tree in accordance with a known natural law. However, the tree that it generates is of the same species; and so it generates itself as far as the species is concerned, in which it, on one side as effect, on the other as cause, unceasingly produces itself, and likewise, often producing itself, continuously preserves itself, as species.
>
> Second, a tree also generates itself as an individual. This sort of effect we call growth; but this is to be taken in such a way that is entirely distinct from any other increase in magnitude in accordance with mechanical laws, and is to be regarded as equivalent, although under another name, with generation (*Zeugung*). This plant first prepares the matter that it adds to itself with a quality peculiar to its species, which could not be provided by the mere mechanism of nature of nature outside of it, and develops itself further by means of material which, as far as its composition is concerned, is its own product….
>
> Third, one part of this creature also generates itself in such a way that the preservation of the one is reciprocally dependent on the preservation of the others…. At the same time, the leaves are certainly products of the tree, yet they preserve it in turn, for repeated defoliation would kill it, and its growth depends upon their effect on the stem. The self-help of nature in the case of injury in these creatures, where the lack of a part that is necessary for the preservation of neighboring parts can be made good by the others; the miscarriages or malformations in growth, where certain parts form themselves in an entirely new way because of chance defects or obstacles, in order to preserve that which exists and bring forth an anomalous creature: these I mention only in passing, although they belong among the most wonderful properties of organized creatures. (5:370-2)

Despite the use of a particular organism as an example here, it is clear that this characterization applies to all organisms since it is meant as an elucidation of the concept of a natural end. This requires abstracting from the organs of a particular organism and considering how the organism generates itself (is cause and effect of itself). Organisms generate themselves in three ways, and each form of self-generation displays the manner in which an organism is both cause and effect of itself through reciprocal part-whole relations.

The first form of self-generation is reproduction. The tree generates itself as species through reproduction, the purpose of which is to preserve the species. The individual members of the species can be taken as parts that produce the whole. The individual members are also produced by the species-whole, in the sense that new trees are the product of other trees generating themselves as species.[108]

The second form of self-generation is growth, but Kant immediately distinguishes growth as generation from mere "increase in magnitude in accordance with mechanical laws" (5:371). What is of concern here is not growth as an effect, but the process by which growth is made possible through the integration of matter from outside and its conversion not just into nutrients and energy, but into something organic, such as new parts of the organism. Growth in this sense has two stages. The first stage involves the integration and preparation of the external matter "with a quality peculiar to its species." Here the organs break down the external material and turn it into something useful for the organism. The second stage involves the integration of this new material by the organism as a whole. In growth, the parts produce material that sustains the whole organism, and the whole structures the process by which new parts are created.

The third form of self-generation is self-maintenance through the reciprocal dependence of parts upon other parts and upon the whole tree. The leaves of the tree depend on the roots of the tree for acquiring nutrients from the soil, and the roots of the tree depend on the leaves for acquiring energy from sunlight. In this way the leaves are both the cause and effect of the roots. There is also reciprocal dependence of the parts upon the whole. The parts are for the sake of the whole and the whole is for the sake of the parts. Thus, organisms display a kind of plasticity when faced with obstacles or threats. A tree that loses a branch, for example, can grow a new

[108] Zuckert writes that "a tree produces itself and was produced by the representation of its species," where presumably this representation is just the power to produce new trees. Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 98.

one. In this way the whole of the tree devotes itself to the re-generation and healing of its parts. In this form of self-maintenance, the organisms' activity is modified in light of the circumstances of the parts in order to maintain the organism as a whole.

The self-generation of organisms characterizes the particular unity that is unique to organisms.[109] The unity or coordination displayed by the parts of an organism can only be understood as governed by a prior concept of the whole:

> for a natural end it is requisite, first, that its parts (as far as their existence and their form are concerned) are possible only through their relation to the whole … [and] second its parts be combined into a whole by being reciprocally the cause and effect of their form. (5:373)[110]

The unique feature of organisms is that in organisms the parts are for the sake of the whole and the whole is for the sake of the parts. In artifacts, the parts are for the sake of the whole, but the whole is *not* reciprocally for the parts, which is to say that artifacts do not reproduce, grow, or repair their parts.[111] Each of the three features show how the organism generates itself, but the second and third forms in particular display the internal relation governed by an end that is characteristic of individual organisms. In understanding organisms as purposive we take them to be self-generating, which is to take their contingent and diverse parts as reciprocally related to the whole.

While both artifacts and organisms are purposive, the analogy to artifacts (and the consideration of organisms 'as if' designed) "says far too little about nature," because organisms are self-generating (5:374). According to Zuckert, "organisms ought to be understood as more thoroughly, *intrinsically* purposive than artifacts."[112] Organisms are more internally purposive

[109] Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 100.
[110] See also 5:407-8, as well as 20:236.
[111] Presumably a robot that could reproduce, grow, and repair its parts would count as an organism.
[112] Zuckert, *Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 119.

than artifacts because the purpose of an artifact depends on a designer outside of it and is always relative to some end (even an end that was not intended by a designer). Once the designer or user of the artifact is taken into account, the purposiveness of the artifact can be understood or restated mechanically (as technical means-ends relations). Kant notes this difference by saying that organisms possess a formative power whereas artifacts merely possess a motive power (5:374). In the First Introduction to the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant writes that we must judge the organism "in accordance with a purpose that lies within itself" (20:250). Organisms do have an end or purpose, and in this respect judging an organism is like judging an artifact—it is to bring the object under a concept. The difference is that in the case of artifacts the end is relative to a user, and often the use to which it is put is very specific. Organisms, however, have only the general end of self-generation.

I began this section with a question about the normativity of objective purposiveness. Now that I have explained the concept of an organism or natural end, I can return to this question. Unlike artifacts, which have very particular ends or purposes, organisms only have a general end. A natural end can be characterized as cause and effect of itself. The tree example helps sharpen the concept of a natural end by showing that a natural end can be characterized in terms of self-generation, which takes three forms. In this way we may understand organisms as governed by the concept of a natural end, as something that ought to be a certain way: "A teleological judgment compares the concept of a product of nature as it is with one of what it ought to be" (20:240). The end of self-generation provides a criterion for the evaluation of organisms. An organism that fails to generate itself in the three ways explained above is a defective organism.

Ginsborg rejects that the normativity of teleology can be understood in terms of practical means-ends rationality. But practical means-ends rationality is appropriate for evaluating artifacts, and perhaps it is appropriate for evaluating organisms as well. I suggest that the normativity of the teleological judgment of organisms amounts to the claim that the organism ought to generate or preserve itself. Objective purposiveness is the normativity of practical means-ends rationality applied to natural ends. To fail to take the means to one's end is irrational. In the case of organisms of course it makes no sense to speak of 'irrationality,' and instead we speak of organisms as defective or contrapurposive, on the basis that the organism does not agree with the concept of what it is supposed to be. Again, for an organism to be defective is for it to fail to be cause and effect of itself, or perhaps more intuitively, for it to fail to generate itself.

Ginsborg objects that it is not clear why, for example, the horseshoe crab ought to have eight legs rather than six. Why might a six-legged horseshoe crab be considered defective? As may already be obvious, on my account there may in fact be nothing defective about a six-legged horseshoe crab. For something to be a good organism it must generate itself. If the six-legged crab fails to generate itself—say, because its body size or shape is such that six legs are not enough for it to balance itself or move itself effectively—then it is defective. It should be noted that what makes it defective is not merely that it has six legs. Having six legs is not itself a defect. Instead, what is defective is that the crab of a certain size, shape, or habitat has six legs. Such an organism lacks unity—its parts are not for the sake of its other parts, nor are the parts for the sake of the whole.

Obviously much more detail about the crab would be needed in order to accurately identify whether a certain aberration constitutes a defect, an advantage, or is merely just a

peculiarity.[113] If the crab is able to generate itself in spite of this aberration, then it is not a defect. What this shows is that this crab is peculiar, and possibly even the very early stages of a new species of crab.[114] Whether this crab agrees with a certain species-end does not show that the organism is defective. The particular manner in which the organism generates itself, for example, how it eats or what sorts of digestive organs it has, will be important for distinguishing species. But again, the normativity of teleological judgment only comes in at the general level of the organism. If one wishes to speak of an organism as defective with respect to its species, such as saying that a bird that cannot fly is a defective bird, the normativity of this judgment is dependent on the normativity of the concept of the organism in general, namely, self-generation.[115]

This account of organisms as natural ends provides criteria for the evaluation of organisms. Unlike artifacts, which are evaluated relative to specific purposes (perhaps even purposes that the designer did not intend or foresee), organisms are evaluated under the general concept of a natural end. Of course, whether a particular creature generates depends in large part upon its environment. Organisms possess an "inner natural perfection," which might be

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[113] One cannot judge it to be defective or not without knowing lots of other information about the organism and its environment, such as its size, shape, how it moves, what it eats, how it eats, and so on. Given the amount of information one would have to have, it is easier to simply observe the organism in its environment to see whether it generates itself or not. Kant sometimes suggests that nature as a whole might be viewed as an organism, with particular organisms functioning as 'organs' within the whole of nature. Presumably it is the case that particular organisms must stand in certain relations of unity or harmony with other organisms, provided that nature as a whole (taken as an organism) is not defective. I mention this merely in passing, as I don't have the space to discuss this possibility here.

[114] The question of what a species is, and what counts as a new species, are difficult questions. I don't mean to settle them here, but rather to use the account of objective purposiveness to distinguish defective aberrations from non-defective aberrations.

[115] The thought is that there is a contradiction in the concept of a natural end that cannot generate itself. But there is no contradiction in the concept of a bird that cannot fly. Of course, in unpacking precisely what is defective about this bird, we will have to know quite a bit about the particular species. That is, insofar as the concept of a bird that cannot fly *is* contradictory, this is because one has all sorts of empirical information about the bird, e.g., that its legs are too short to be used effectively for movement, that it must procure its food through flight, and so on. Given a host of empirical facts about a particular bird, it may be the case that because it has short legs that it cannot use to move well in its particular environment, the only way for it to generate itself is through flight.

understood as a kind of perfection which is not external to the object (as in the case of artifacts), but which is part of the organism itself (5:375). The thought seems to be that when we say that an artifact is good, we are not actually praising the artifact but rather the designer. To say that an organism is good is to recognize that it is as it should be, according to its own internal standards. Teleological judgments are judgments of perfection: the objective purposiveness of organisms is "the perfection of a thing in accordance with a concept that lies in itself…" (20:250).[116]

Kant claims we must judge organisms as purposive because teleological laws are the only way to bring the unity of an organism under laws. Organisms are a natural end, which means their purposiveness is internal rather than external. This difference reflects a normative difference. We can only identify an artifact as good or bad with respect to some particular purpose, while we can say that organisms are good or bad with respect to the general purpose of self-generation. In the next section I will discuss purposiveness in the context of animal beings.

III. Purposiveness and Animal Nature

The analogy between organisms and artifacts fails to capture the essential feature of the organism as cause and effect of itself. Instead, "Perhaps one comes closer to this inscrutable property [the 'self-propagating formative power' or 'inner natural perfection' of the organism] if

[116] See also 20: 228, 20:240, 5:193, and 5:373. Zuckert disagrees that the internal purposiveness of natural ends constitutes perfection (*Kant on Beauty and Biology*, 122). Zuckert appeals to the apparent claim that organisms are purposiveness without a purpose, but as noted earlier Kant only seems to identify organisms this way early on in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, before he has defended the characterization of organisms as cause and effect of themselves. By now it should be clear that Kant thinks that organisms can be judged under a concept. The other reasons Zuckert offers in support of her claim that judgments about the internal purposiveness of organisms are not judgments of perfection have to do with ambiguities regarding the scope of such judgments (judging the organism under a species-concept vs. judging the organism as a natural end). On Zuckert's view these kinds of ambiguities are inescapable because she thinks that teleological judgment ascribes purposiveness without a purpose. We notice purposiveness in sparrows, in the sparrow's organs, and in organisms more broadly, but for Zuckert these are all cases of purposiveness without a purpose and so none of them exhibit perfection. Zuckert is right that these are separate judgments, but on my view, we judge the perfection of organisms in terms of its ability to generate itself. Questions about the perfection of sparrow or the perfection of its wings are derivative upon judgments about the perfection of the organism in general.

one calls it an analogue of life" (5:374). To be sure, this analogy is also inadequate, since either it attributes life to mere matter, or it regards organisms as something like divine artifacts (5:374). I wish to bracket these complicated questions about the relationship between organisms and matter and instead focus on the normativity of teleological judgment, in particular how teleological judgment is different in the case of animals than in the case of mere organisms. Animals are a particular type of organism, and the natural teleology of animal nature reflects their special character. The difference is that mere organisms like plants do not have a faculty of desire, so for Kant plants are not living, strictly speaking. In his account of animals as purposive, then, Kant attributes natural purposiveness not to the animal as a whole, but to particular powers of the animal, namely, the natural appetites.

Of course, there is some similarity between the ends of organisms in the *Critique of Judgment* and the ends of animal nature in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. Both organisms and animals have ends that have to do with self-preservation, preservation of the species, and the preservation of capacities for self-maintenance. However, as mentioned, animals are living, whereas for Kant some organisms like plants and trees are not. As explained earlier, for something to be alive, according to Kant, is for it to possess a capacity of desire: "Life is the faculty of a being to act in accordance with the laws of the faculty of desire" (5:9n). The faculty of desire is the power to bring about the object of one's representations. Animals possess a faculty of choice that, though determined entirely by impulse, nonetheless constitutes a form of agency that mere organisms such as plants lack. Kant's claim that plants and trees are not alive is striking, but it is important to keep in mind that for Kant this just means that plants and trees do not have appetites. When explaining how a flower reproduces or how it gains nutrition, we don't think of the flower as satisfying an appetite. Even if this is wrong and flowers do in fact have

something like the ‘desire’ for pollination or for nutrition, the flower is not capable of acting in accordance with those desires.[117] Since animals are living, the account of the natural ends of animal nature makes reference to the fact that animal action involves the faculty of desire. Kant calls the essential desires of animal nature the “impulses of nature,” but for the most part I will refer to them as the natural appetites.

Kant’s account of the natural appetites in the *Metaphysics of Morals* builds on the account of the natural teleology of organisms given in the *Critique of Judgment* by attributing the three natural ends to the natural appetites. Teleological evaluation of animals is akin to teleological evaluation of organisms in that both are evaluation with respect to the criteria of self-generation. The difference is that mere organisms are evaluated simply with respect to whether they achieve the end of self-generation. For animals this failure can be cashed out differently, since animals have a faculty of desire. This is why teleological evaluation of animals is in terms of the agreement between natural appetites and their respective natural purposes. Teleological evaluation of a plant, on the other hand, simply refers to whether the plant generates or fails to generate itself.

At this point one might object that Kant’s sensitivity to the differences between the teleological evaluation of plants and animals should have kept him from thinking that teleological evaluation is appropriate for human beings. Just as animals are a particular kind of organism, and so the teleological evaluation of animals must be different from that of plants, particularly in virtue of their capacity for animal choice, it might be pointed out that the

[117] We might take Kant to be identifying two different levels of purposiveness within a living being. There are the parts of oneself that aim at self-generation independent of any choice or activity—such as the chemical processes of digestion, or the way in which the body can repair a broken bone. But of course, one’s choices effect those ends as well, such as what I eat, or whether I choose to ‘listen’ to my body when it tells me, through a surge of pain, that my bone is still broken and not to put more pressure on it.

teleological evaluation of human beings must also be different from that of animal beings. But, the objection might proceed, the fact that human beings possess a capacity for free choice means that it is not appropriate to evaluate human beings with regard to teleological norms at all. I will spend the rest of the chapter addressing this worry. Before I address this issue head on, I want to clarify the scope of teleological norms in the context of moral evaluation.

The point I want to make begins with the difference between mere organisms and animals that possess a faculty of choice determined by impulse. Mere organisms simply have ends, understood as forms of self-generation. For animals the story involves an additional step that involves the faculty of desire, and in particular the impulses of nature. The natural appetites may be regarded as essential to animals, since without them animals would lack the incentive that is necessary for animals in general to generate themselves. This means that there are at least three ways in which natural teleology allows for the identification of a natural being as defective. First, it may be defective simply because it is physically deformed. Second, it may be psychologically deformed, such as an animal that lacks an impulse of nature. Third, it may possess the impulse of nature but fail to satisfy it purposively, as in the case of marine animals that eat plastic because it has been in the ocean long enough that it smells like algae. This final case is one that is defective in virtue of choice—the animal acts on the basis of a natural impulse, but in such a way that is contrary to the natural purpose of the impulse. Of course, the animal is not responsible for this last kind of defect. Animals are not agents in the first place, and animals are not the ones responsible for polluting the oceans with plastic. The first and second defects are defects for

which a moral agent is not responsible, whereas the third case describes a defect for which a moral agent is responsible.[118] In what follows I will focus on this third form of defect.

This form of defect has to do with particular kinds of actions, namely, actions where the motive has to do with the satisfaction of a natural appetite. This is important to note because it agrees with my claim that an action can violate a duty to oneself as an animal being only if one aims at the satisfaction of a natural impulse. The action, say, of a soldier sacrificing her life for her country out of a sense of responsibility as a soldier is *not* contrapurposive since her motive is not based in self-love. Or, to put this point another way, acting in such a way that will likely get one killed is only wrong on the grounds of natural teleology if one's motive is self-love. Again, this consideration is why Kant appends each discussion of the vices of animality with a series of casuistical questions that seem to suggest that he is not so certain about the claims he has just made. The point of those questions, I think, is to show that human beings can have many different motivations to perform actions that appear identical from the outside. There is no fixed answer to these questions, which is why Kant does not provide one.

In this way the appeal to natural teleology does not risk attributing a final end to human beings. Natural teleology gives rise to obligations regarding actions where one's maxim involves an impulse of nature. In animals, natural teleology constitutes the entirety of what it is to be an animal, since all animal action is grounded in the natural appetites. In human beings, natural teleology determines only some of our ends, and only insofar as we act from a natural appetite. Natural teleology can normatively evaluate only that which is natural.

[118] In the first and second cases I am imagining defects for which one is not responsible, what would be called handicaps in human beings. There may of course be physical or psychological defects that an agent is responsible for, in virtue of causing them to himself.

Of course, qualification of the scope of teleological evaluation does not resolve all of the problems associated with Kant's appeal to natural teleology. But before I proceed to discuss these other objections, I will make one more remark. In the previous section I noted that the normative evaluation of organisms is derivative upon the natural end—the end of self-generation—and not the species end. This is because something that fails to agree with its apparent species concept is not therefore defective, since it may be a novel species. Assessing the health of an organism—looking to see if it does generate itself—does require assessing the species in its environment and trying to get a sense of its life form. But the normativity involved in judging an organism to be good or bad derives from the concept of an organism in general, not the concept of a species. Thus, a bird that is unable to fly is not thereby defective, unless its inability to fly renders it unable to generate itself. I am willing to speak of species-ends, such as the end of being a bird, but only insofar as this end is not taken as normative (at least not independent of the natural end). But there is no corresponding (natural) end of human nature, since human beings are rational animals.[119] Our ends are open to us in a way that they are not, say, for the bird, since it is logically possible for one to avoid acting from a natural appetite. Nonetheless, we can still evaluate the human being in accordance with natural teleology, insofar as one does act from a natural appetite. But in this way natural teleology doesn't exhaust what it is to be a human.

IV. Natural Teleology and Kant's Moral Philosophy

I now turn to the question of whether it is appropriate to use teleological standards in practical philosophy. To begin, there are two main lines of objection. Though related, I will separate the metaphysical objection to natural teleology from the normative objection to natural

[119] There is a *rational* end of human nature, namely, the highest good.

teleology. The metaphysical objection concerns the extent to which it is accurate to understand the human being as a natural creature, such as the status of the natural appetites in human beings, and whether the human being is relevantly similar to animal beings for the purpose of teleological evaluation. The normative objection concerns the appropriateness of appealing to teleological laws in ethics, and in particular whether the appeal to natural teleology infringes on a rational being's autonomy. I will explain these objections further in the following sections.

A. The Metaphysical Objection to Natural Teleology

The metaphysical objection is that the difference between human beings and animals rules out evaluating human beings and animals by the same standards. The thought is that even if human beings have a sensible nature in common with animal beings, this sensible nature is significantly different in rational beings. If so, human sensible nature is not fit for evaluation by teleological standards, or at least not the same standards that are used for mere animal beings.

Kant is clear that sensibility is different for human beings than for mere animals. But what must be clarified is precisely what aspect of sensibility is invoked in the appeal to natural teleology, and whether that aspect undergoes any relevant changes. For natural teleology, the important aspect of sensibility under consideration is the natural appetites. My view is that the reinterpretation of sensibility in rational beings does create new, more sophisticated objects of desire beyond those available to mere animals, but these new objects do not outright replace the objects of desire that are part of basic sensibility shared with animals. Beyond the objects of sensibility, however, it is important to keep in mind that the human being's relation to desire is also significantly different than the animal's relation to desire. I will end this section by considering this difference.

I will begin by examining the objects of the natural appetites: self-love in general, sexual pleasure, pleasure from food, and pleasure in the company of others. I will set aside self-love, since as a general orientation rather than a specific desire it does not undergo the same kind of transformation. In the *Conjectural Beginning of Human History*, Kant writes about the transformation of sexual desire with an emphasis on the human power of refusal. The withdrawal of the desired object from the senses, symbolized by the fig leaf, serves to transform "a transient, for the most part periodic impulse" into something "prolonged and even increased" (8:112-3). Human beings are able to develop sexual desire such that it can be satisfied in novel ways. What Kant seems to find particularly compelling about refusal is that it demonstrates the power of the human being's free choice in favoring an "ideal" over a "merely sensed stimulus," which marks the "dominion of reason over impulse" (8:113). Kant takes this to mirror the transition from "merely animal desire gradually over to love, and with the latter from the feeling of the merely agreeable over to the taste for beauty" (8:113). Kant is clear that reason promotes the development of new objects of desire, but nothing in this account supports the thought that the new objects of sexual desire take the place of the more basic animal objects of desire.[120] In fact, if refusal in the context of sexual desire is important precisely because it demonstrates the dominion of reason over impulse, then this would suggest that the new objects of desire do not replace the old objects of desire. In the passage Kant is presumably thinking of prudential reasoning, delayed gratification, and the ability to reflectively consider the object of one's desires. These new objects compete with the old objects, just as impulse competes with rational law for practical agents.

[120] For an account of human sexual desire, and in particular how sexual desire is integrated by the predisposition to humanity, see Varden, *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 122.

To use the language of the predispositions, the reinterpretation of sensible nature does not eliminate the objects of animality but creates the objects of humanity and even personality alongside them. Consider the appetite for food. Kant's take on the reinterpretation of this desire is tied to the social form it takes on. Human beings don't just eat food, they have meals.[121] Like refusal in the context of sex, taking the time to cook a meal requires one to expose oneself to the raw ingredients and to stand by as one's dish cooks, experiencing the tantalizing aromas and sights of what one will eat. At its highest expression, the appetite for food gives rise to the desire for a meal, a social experience that aims to satisfy one's desire for conversation and enjoyment of the company of others (7:278). A dinner party aims at pleasure in the company of others, not merely the enjoyment of food. Everyone needs to eat, but while the meal serves as the occasion for the gathering, the point of a meal is the company of those eating together rather than the food itself. Again, the new desire that results from the reinterpretation of the basic appetite (in this case, food) is a social desire. There are thus multiple ways of evaluating how one eats, given the different sorts of reasons one may have for eating. The meal as a social occasion will be judged in terms of how well it facilitates interaction, which is different from how one might evaluate eating because one is very hungry. In the latter case one's desire is simply to eat, and the satisfaction of this desire is pleasing, though pleasure is not what is sought. The reinterpretation of sensibility manifests higher predispositions, but those do not replace the basic objects of the natural appetites.

Self-love is difficult because it is not an appetite for a particular object but is more like an orientation. Self-love is a form of regard for oneself, "a predominant *benevolence* toward oneself (*Philautia*)" (5:73). I call self-love an orientation because it directs one's efforts at satisfying an

[121] Here it is helpful to keep in mind that unlike English, German has separate verbs to distinguish how humans eat (*essen*) from how animals eat (*fressen*).

appetite, for instance, primarily toward oneself. The appetites direct one toward certain objects, and self-love explains why one aims at finding food for oneself rather than for others.[122] Self-love, Kant writes, is "natural and active in us even prior to the moral law" (5:73). Self-love must be restricted so that it agrees with the moral law, in which case it is "rational self-love" (5:73). Thus, even self-love retains most of its original character in human beings, needing only to be restricted but not to be changed fundamentally. While the text here does not settle the question about the content of rational self-love or its relation to natural teleology, it does provide evidence that Kant views at least some parts of our basic appetites in their more basic animalistic form.

In sum, the reinterpretation of sensibility makes possible social and quasi-moral objects of desire, but not in such a way that changes the character of the natural appetites. A sensible creature will always be affected by the pain of hunger, for example, regardless of whether the creature is rational or not. Even if the human being is a creature susceptible to the natural appetites in relevantly similar ways to animals, it is still unclear why the natural teleology of those appetites should possess normative force for a rational being.[123] The human being's relation to its appetites is completely different than the animal's relation to its appetites, in virtue of different powers of choice for humans and animals. While animal choice is "determined" by impulse, human choice is "affected but not determined" by impulse (6:213). This raises a problem, since if human beings never act from impulse, at least for actions for which they are responsible, there are no actions that fall under the purvey of evaluation by natural teleology.

[122] The reconstruction here is artificial in order to highlight the role of self-love. It's not as if one first has a general desire to find food for somebody, before concluding that that person is oneself.

[123] I admit that it's somewhat artificial to separate the metaphysical and normative objections to the use of natural teleology in moral philosophy. Still, the normative objection seems better suited for debate concerning the appropriateness of natural teleology, since the metaphysical aspect of this issue can reduce to presumptions about human nature and ambiguities therein (i.e. what is the status of sensible nature in a free being). Kant's moral theory, on the other hand, provides constraints that more clearly exclude certain moral principles because they are not adequately grounded in reason, they inappropriately infringe on autonomy, and so on.

I take it that having an appetite can count as a reason for satisfying that appetite, but the worry is that this requires understanding the appetite in a rationalized or a conceptualized way that risks the ability to understand it teleologically. I will say more about what it means to endorse an appetite shortly. To anticipate, I will argue that any experience of pleasure or displeasure related to the natural appetites is already teleologically informed. But for now, I will just note that to say that an appetite can count as a reason for acting is of course not to say that the presence of an appetite alone justifies any instance of satisfying the appetite. The fact that I am hungry may not provide a reason for eating if resources are particularly scarce and others are starving, or if one lacks access to ethically or sustainably produced foods. Animal choice is determined by appetite, and in the case of competing appetites the strongest one wins out. But appetites alone do not adequately explain the behavior of rational beings, in particular if we try to understand our behavior from the first-person perspective. Any attempt to explain human behavior in terms of appetites must at some point appeal to viewing one's appetite as reason-giving. And if the appetites are understood as reason-giving, then it is hard to see how they could be the sort of thing that are appropriate to understand through natural teleology. Even if the more basic forms of the natural appetites are retained and not replaced by the more sophisticated versions of these appetites, the form of these appetites must be quite different in humans capable of endorsing these appetites and regarding them as reasons. I will briefly set this objection aside so that I can explain the normative objections to natural teleology. I will then respond to both objections.

B. The Normative Objection to Natural Teleology

As already noted, Kant's appeal to natural teleology in the context of duties to oneself appears as far back as the argument against suicide in the *Groundwork*, where Kant argues that

suicide is wrong in virtue of the natural purpose of self-love. The maxim of the individual considering suicide is to end his life on the basis of self-love when his life contains the prospect of more misery than joy (4:422). There are a number of strange things about this maxim. No information is given that would indicate how certain this individual is in making this prediction. It is also hard to imagine considering ending one's life merely because there could be more misery than joy (as opposed to significantly more misery than joy), though from the examples that Kant gives later in the *Metaphysics of Morals* discussion of suicide it seems likely that Kant primarily has Stoic attitudes toward suicide in mind. Setting these concerns aside though, I want to focus on the role of self-love and natural teleology in this argument. Kant goes on to say that this maxim is contradictory insofar as the individual ends his life on the basis of self-love, but the natural purpose of self-love is to preserve one's life. This maxim could not, therefore, "obtain as a universal law of nature, and consequently it entirely contradicts the supreme principle of duty" (4:422). Kant concludes that a natural being that uses a fundamental inclination, i.e. self-love, contrapurposively "thus could not *subsist* as nature" (4:422, my emphasis).[124]

According to Paul Guyer this argument contains a suppressed premise that it is immoral to use an impulse of nature (here self-love) contrapurposively.[125] Guyer objects that this premise "has no foundation within Kant's ethical theory at all, and is ultimately inconsistent with the full

[124] Just what it means to subsist as nature, and whether something that appears defective might in fact be advantageous, depends overwhelmingly on the creature's environment. Given the account from the "Critique of Teleological Judgment," subsist as nature means more or less the power of self-generation. In the human case this becomes even more complicated, as we not only deal with a variety of environments but also human interaction with and transformation of that environment.

[125] Guyer glosses the suppressed premise as "it is immoral to adopt an end other than that which nature intends for us." Guyer, "Ends of Reason and Ends of Nature," in *The Journal of Value Inquiry*, 36 (2002): 180-81. The problem is that this suggests that we are beholden to the natural teleology of *all* our organs or inclinations. And while Kant does suggest, namely in the introductions to the *Critique of Judgment*, that everything in nature has a purpose, this is in the context of the general principle of reflective judgment (logical purposiveness). When he discusses the teleological principle in relation to obligation (in both the *Groundwork* and in the *Metaphysics of Morals*) he limits the moral import of natural teleology to just the impulses of nature (the fundamental inclinations of animal nature). Against Guyer, it is only immoral to adopt a contrapurposive end for an impulse of nature, since only these impulses are constitutive of animal nature.

scope of human freedom."[126] Guyer claims that the standards that make for a good organism or animal bear no relevant similarity to the standards that make for a virtuous or good person. In fact, Guyer contends that such standards infringe upon an agent's freedom. On Guyer's view, it is not clear why a rational agent should be concerned with natural teleology, or to put this differently, it seems possible to have a commitment to morality while being indifferent to the natural purposes of one's particular nature. What is relevant to morality is one's rational nature; animal nature is contingent and thus does not seem like the sort of thing that has any authoritative bearing on how one acts.

This sort of thought is at the heart of Christine Korsgaard's objection to natural teleology in her paper "Kant's Formula of Universal Law." Korsgaard examines different interpretations of the way in which maxims that do not qualify as universal laws can be said to contain a contradiction. One interpretation she considers is the teleological contradiction interpretation, according to which a maxim is contradictory on the grounds that the maxim could not serve as a teleological law.[127] Korsgaard examines the *Groundwork* argument against suicide in this context, and she objects to the teleological contradiction interpretation on the basis that the person considering suicide may not be committed to the natural purpose of self-love.[128] If such a person lacks a commitment to the natural purpose of self-love, then it is not clear in what sense killing oneself out of self-love involves a contradiction. Like Guyer, Korsgaard seems to be thinking that Kant's appeal to natural teleology involves a suppressed premise regarding the status of natural purposes. And Korsgaard sees no compelling reason why one should be committed to this premise.

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[126] Guyer, "Ends of Reason and Ends of Nature," 179.
[127] Christine Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Universal Law," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 66, no. 1-2 (1985): 25-6.
[128] Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Universal Law," 34-5.

The point can be sharpened by looking at the case of false promising. In the case of false promising the contradiction can be seen in that the agent is committed to there being a general assumption of trust between persons, while also being committed to violating the trust of another person. Such a person is both committed to a rule and not committed to it, which is a contradiction. Korsgaard's point is that the case of suicide out of self-love does not exhibit a similar tension. It is not as if the person considering suicide both is and is not committed to natural purpose of self-love. Indeed, her point is that such a person is indifferent to the natural purpose of self-love. Korsgaard then imagines that it might be claimed that "a rational being as such wills a well-functioning teleological system, regardless of whether he wills the purposes that it serves."[129] In this way one who does not will the natural purpose of self-love may nonetheless be committed to the natural purpose of self-love, in virtue of willing a well-functioning teleological system. This, she thinks, is also unsuccessful because "the world does not require a self-preservation instinct (or any other teleological device) to make people go on living unless one supposes that it is better that people go on living. But this is what the suicide undertakes not to suppose."[130]

As we have seen, in his account of organisms as natural purposes Kant *does* claim that it is part of the good of an organism that it preserves itself, and indeed that we must think of the organism as having this end. Of course, with regard to persons Kant should not be taken to be committed to the unqualified claim that it's better that people go on living. Such a claim has a consequentialist tone that is entirely alien to Kant. To be sure, the concept of an organism presupposes self-preservation (as self-generation), but this is not the same as forming a resolution with respect to self-preservation. Again, Kant's position is simply that self-love should

[129] Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Universal Law," 34.
[130] Korsgaard, "Kant's Formula of Universal Law," 35.

not be one's motive for ending one's life, since the natural purpose of self-love is self-preservation. There may be cases in which it may in fact not be better that a *person* goes on living, such as the case of Cato mentioned in the previous chapter. Such actions could be appropriate, so long as, among other things, one's motive for performing them is not self-love. Kant's view is not that there are no circumstances under which it might be appropriate for a person to end his or her life. Rather, his view is the narrower thought that self-love can never be an appropriate motive for ending one's life. But even with this important qualification in mind, Korsgaard's question remains: why should rational beings be taken as having a concern for the natural teleology of their natural appetites?

In what follows I will argue that natural teleology does possess a normative status, owing to the internal natural teleology of natural pleasure and displeasure. Pleasure and displeasure provide one with a teleological awareness of oneself through feeling, which means that it is a contradiction to satisfy a natural appetite in a manner inconsistent with its natural teleology. Since pleasure and displeasure bear an internal relation to natural teleology, there is no threat to autonomy by invoking natural teleology in certain cases. Moreover, the internal natural teleology of pleasure and displeasure allows for an explanation of how one can endorse a natural appetite.

V. The Internal Natural Teleology of Natural Pleasures and Pains

Kant offers a systematic account of pleasure and displeasure in the *Anthropology*. The feeling of pleasure and displeasure can occur either "through *sense* (enjoyment)" or "through the *power of imagination* (taste)" (7:230). My interest is in pleasure and displeasure through sense. Kant terms pleasure through sense enjoyment, and that which brings enjoyment is called the agreeable; displeasure through sense is pain, and that which brings pain is called the disagreeable (7:230).

Pleasure and displeasure are feelings that modify one's "state of mind" (7:231). Unlike sense-perception, which represents the world, pleasure and displeasure represent something about the subject, namely, whether some object agrees with one's life. A feeling of the disagreeable "urges me to *leave* my state," while a feeling of the agreeable "drives me to *maintain* my state" (7:231). The phenomenological character of enjoyment and pain as feelings of urges and drives highlights their non-inferential status.[131] For Kant these are not accidental features of enjoyment and pain. Indeed, he goes on to define enjoyment and pain in the following way: "Enjoyment is the feeling of promotion of life; pain is that of a hindrance of life" (7:231). The feelings of promotion and hindrance of life are feelings that put one in touch with one's "vital force" (7:231). In the second Critique Kant writes that "Life is the faculty of a being to act in accordance with the laws of the faculty of desire … Pleasure is the *representation of the agreement of an object or of an action with the* subjective *conditions of life* (5:9n).[132] Pleasure and displeasure are not mere feelings or brute sensations. Instead, they contain a cognitive element in terms of a representation of an object or action in terms of whether it promotes or hinders one's life.[133] For instance, to experience hunger is to have a normative awareness of one's state as not agreeing with the subjective conditions of life. To feel enjoyment or pain is to make a kind of primitive practical judgment about one's state, and whether it promotes or

[131] Kant also claims that, in a more refined way, the temperaments are ways in which feelings appear to human beings in a certain way (7:287). One's temperament can determine in rather immediate ways how certain objects or actions effect one. For a sympathetic reconstruction of Kant's account of the temperaments, see Varden, *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 67.

[132] In this passage Kant does not distinguish between pleasure as mere sensation (enjoyment) and intellectual pleasure. See also the following passage from the third Critique: "[In the sensation of satisfaction] the representation is related entirely to the subject, indeed to its feeling of life, under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure" (5:204). The difference is that in the case of the beautiful I expect that everyone else should judge it to be beautiful, while in the case of the agreeable I do not expect everyone to share my judgment.

[133] Janelle DeWitt says that feelings are "evaluative judgments" of a particular kind. DeWitt, "Feeling and Inclination, Rationalizing the Animal Within," 75. Allen Wood writes that pleasure is "a subjective judgment … of value. Feeling is essentially value cognitive." Allen W. Wood, "Feeling and Desire in the Human Animal," 98.

hinders life. What makes this judgment primitive is that it is akin to a non-inferential seeming in the case of perception. Kant is offering a simple account of why certain things feel enjoyable and others painful. Enjoyment is just the feeling of promotion of life.

If pleasure and displeasure are feelings that constitute primitive judgments, one immediate question concerns the accuracy of such feelings. In particular, might there be cases of error in feeling enjoyment or pain of the sort exemplified in sense-perception by a stick that looks bent in water? For example, exercise can be painful and so seem to be a hindrance to life, even though one knows it is good. There are a few things to say about this example. First, exercise is a complex endeavor, in that there are parts of it that can be very satisfying, as when one sets a personal milestone, despite being a painful undertaking. Second, not all exercise must be painful, as in the case of moderate exercise. Third, when exercise is painful it is the result of self-overcoming and pushing one's limits. Considered in isolation exercise is painful, but one should also keep in mind the many benefits brought about by exercise, some of which may extend far into the future and may also have more to do with preventing future pain than providing gratification.[134] Like sense-perception, the feeling of pleasure and displeasure is also subject to illusion. In both cases one must be careful not to quickly rush to a conclusion.

Since I am discussing enjoyment here, I want to pause for a moment and discuss the claim that the natural purpose of the appetite for food is preservation of the capacity to enjoy life (at the animal level alone). Again, Kant holds the strange view that the natural purpose of the appetite for food is the preservation of the capacity to enjoy life, rather than nutrition. But now that we've seen that Kant views enjoyment as a kind of judgment regarding the promotion or

[134] Recall Kant's comment about opium in the *Lectures on Anthropology*. Opium "at first seems to promote life since it makes the blood very liquid and thin, such that it can spread through the veins fast, but ultimately it has sad consequences" (25:768).

hindrance of life, it is clear that preservation of the capacity to enjoy life at the animal level alone plays an essential role in the animal's ability to preserve itself. Since enjoyment and pain offer a primitive insight into our well-being, it is not so strange that Kant claims that preservation of this capacity is the natural end of one of the natural appetites.[135] This is not to say that one's enjoyment from eating food comes from an awareness of having satisfied the natural purpose of the appetite for food. This would be an oddly revisionist account of what it is to take pleasure in eating. Kant's account of enjoyment and pain as related to natural teleology helps explain the importance of the capacity to enjoy life as a basic evaluative capacity.[136]

For my purposes there are three important considerations that follow from this account. First, the *Anthropology* account of enjoyment and pain makes clear that enjoyment and pain as feelings presuppose a kind of incipient natural teleology. Natural teleology is not external to the satisfaction of the natural appetites as something toward which one may be indifferent. Enjoyment and pain are not mere sensations but involve feeling something *as* good or bad with respect to life. To experience enjoyment in the satisfaction of a natural appetite is to feel the promotion of life. Pain serves as a sign that something is not right with one's current state, in

[135] One might still object that preservation of the capacity to enjoy life, while perhaps a natural purpose of some appetite or capacity, is not the natural purpose of the appetite for food. In the last chapter I suggested that Kant's reasoning may have to do with the fact that he has already attributed the natural end of self-preservation to an appetite, namely, self-love. Given the close relation between nutrition and self-preservation, Kant cannot agree with the tradition that the natural purpose of eating is nutrition, since nutrition is already included under self-preservation.

[136] Kant also makes some puzzling comments about pleasure and displeasure in the *Anthropology* that are worth noting. First, he claims that there is a limit to which life can be promoted, and continuous promotion of the vital force would lead to "quick death from *joy*" (7:231). Moreover, Kant maintains that all cases of enjoyment or pain involve subtle complexities, owing to the fact that "*pain must always precede every enjoyment*" (7:231). From this it follows that "*no enjoyment can immediately follow another*" (7:231). The basis of this claim is partly epistemic, having to do with the inability to know for sure if one's future state will be enjoyable or merely different, and partly metaphysical, due to Kant's claim that pleasure and displeasure are real opposites rather than logical contraries. Kant's comments are somewhat less puzzling if one understands them somewhat figuratively. When he says that pain precedes every enjoyment, he may simply be drawing attention to the fact that uninterrupted enjoyment is subject to diminishing returns. Perhaps one cannot fully or properly enjoy something unless it is preceded by a pain. The idea of a quick death from joy from continuous enjoyment is not actual death, but perhaps a dulling of one's ability to fully enjoy something until one again experiences pain.

virtue of the subjective conditions of life. The satisfaction of a natural appetite often begins with the feeling of a pain, and in the case of a natural appetite this pain could be hunger, sexual desire, or desire for community with others.

Second, despite all the differences between human and animal pleasure, the sensation of enjoyment and pain is experienced by both humans and animals. For both humans and animals, enjoyment and pain are the same representation, namely, the feeling of life, either as its promotion or hindrance. To be sure, human beings will be able to give a much richer articulation of how some pleasure promotes or hinders life. But while the human and animal will have very different conceptions of life, the point is that the cognitive component of pleasure and displeasure are the same. A piece of meat may agree with the tiger's life, but not with the human being's life—even though it would be nourishing, the human being may have other desires in addition to the natural appetites, such as a concern for sustainability or animal welfare.

Third, the account of enjoyment and pain as representations of agreement or disagreement with life helps explain how one might endorse a natural appetite. Earlier I introduced a worry about the ability to endorse a natural appetite on the grounds that endorsing something is to treat it as the sort of thing that can be reason giving. The problem is that on my view the natural appetites must also be relevantly similar for humans and animals, if natural teleology is to be appropriate as a way of evaluating both humans and animals. The worry is that it is not obvious how an appetite could be natural and be the sort of thing one could rationally endorse. But if enjoyment and pain just are representations of some object or action as agreeing with one's life, then it turns out there is no special problem here to begin with. Enjoyment and pain already represent the world as agreeable or disagreeable to the conditions of one's life, so

there is no further problem of how to endorse a natural appetite.[137] If anything, the worry here should run in the opposite direction, regarding the tendency to rush to judgment about the way things seem, something that is problematic precisely because it is so normal for us to take enjoyment and pain as reasons.

There is an essential relation between natural teleology and enjoyment and pain such that the former is the condition of the latter, not just causally, but logically. Something feels enjoyable in virtue of the fact that it promotes life, and something feels painful in virtue of the fact that it hinders life. According to Kant, with the exception of contemplative pleasure, all pleasure is "necessarily connected with desire" for some object (6:212). Kant's understanding of enjoyment and pain is teleological from the outset, so there is no special difficulty with understanding the natural appetites teleologically. One potential worry is that there seem to be two different notions of teleology used in this account. Enjoyment and pain are purposive in a seemingly weaker sense than the purposiveness involved in the duties to oneself as an animal being. This is correct, but the difference is only a difference in degree in terms of the level of specification one can give to the purposiveness in question. Enjoyment or pain in general represents agreement or disagreement with the subjective conditions of life, while enjoyment or pain from the satisfaction of natural appetites represents the agreement or disagreement with the conditions of animal nature.

I've discussed some important aspects of what it is to experience a pleasure; now I will discuss what it is to value or take an interest in a pleasure. An important detail of this account

[137] See Janelle DeWitt, "Feeling and Inclination: Rationalizing the Animal Within." DeWitt argues that feeling, in particular the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, amounts to a kind of practical cognition. On this view, feeling and desire are not nonrational pressures that are yet somehow able to influence a rational agent. DeWitt concludes that Kant does not hold that there is a metaphysical divide between rational nature and brute animal nature, in particular as it regards human agency and motivation.

concerns the nature of the commitment entailed by the satisfaction of natural appetites. If one chooses pleasure for its own sake, why is one committed to the natural teleology of that pleasure?

Kant understands an interest as an incentive of the will that is "*represented by reason*" (5:79). Thus, an interest is something that influences the will on rational grounds (or at least on purportedly rational grounds, in cases of ignorance or self-deception). Moral interest "is a pure sense-free interest of practical reason alone" (5:79). An interest in beauty, on the other hand, involves the harmony or free play of the cognitive powers (imagination and understanding) experienced through the senses. And an interest in natural pleasure involves the feeling of enjoyment through the satisfaction of the natural appetites.

Kant emphasizes the rational aspect of an interest, namely, that an interest is a rational influence on the will. This understanding of an interest makes quite a bit of sense in the case of moral interest, since as Kant notes, the law and only the law is what the morally good agent takes as her incentive. There is no confusion in the idea of taking a rational interest in something that must be rational (the moral law). But how is it that one can come to take an interest in pleasure?[138] In order to do justice to what it is actually like to take an interest in beauty or pleasure, I think it is important to avoid portraying these forms of taking-an-interest-in as explicitly rationalized procedures. It strikes me that taking an interest in something is not a matter of explicit end setting. As noted earlier, Kant's account of enjoyment and pain as non-inferential seemings is well-suited for this role. There is something conceptual in these seemings

[138] In a footnote in the *Groundwork*, Kant distinguishes practical interest from pathological interest. Practical interest is the "dependence of the will upon principles of reason *in themselves*;" pathological interest is the "dependence upon principles of reason for the sake of inclination, namely, where reason supplies only the practical rule as to how to remedy the need of inclination" (4:414n). My concern is with an interest in beauty or pleasure in the practical sense. That is, I am concerned with the question of whether a human being can take an interest in beauty or pleasure, rather than the question of whether a particular action was undertaken from interest.

insofar as one takes them *as* agreeing or disagreeing with one's life. But since they are seemings, this identification as agreeing or disagreeing is not the matter of reflection or even concept application. One way to capture the significance of these seemings is through the notion of inhabiting a world.[139] When taking an interest in something, one finds oneself at home in the world of one's interest. Pleasure and displeasure represent the world as purposive for one's life. To take an interest in something is thus to inhabit a world and to feel comfortable in it. This is largely a matter of self-knowledge, but again this knowledge may be inarticulate in many cases (while it could be conceptualized upon reflection, it need not be). In cases of familiar interests such as an interest in a certain kind of music or food, one's interest amounts to a kind of identification with the thing. It's not just that one finds the music pleasant, but one finds something familiar or comfortable in it.[140] Enjoyment and pain represent something's agreeing or disagreeing with a subject, in terms of general categories like life or animal nature. Taking an interest in something reveals something more personal, insofar as an interest represents something a subject identifies with personally.

To take an interest in beauty is to endorse the form of pleasure that beauty involves. The beautiful represents the harmony of freedom and nature, and so to take an interest in beauty is to feel at home in the natural world thanks to its being purposive for our cognitive faculties.[141] An interest in pleasure from the natural appetites is also to feel at home in the natural world. The difference is that unlike the interest in beauty, an interest in pleasure from the natural appetites

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[139] For more on why it is important for human beings to feel at home in the world, and in particular in their bodies (for example sexual orientation, sexual identity) see Varden, *Sex, Love, and Gender—A Kantian Theory*, 128-9. Varden's analysis is guided by the thought that being at home in the world is a matter of self-knowledge that must attend to both the givenness of sexual orientation and identity and at the same time the essentially free nature of the human being.

[140] This is not to deny that one can take an interest in the novel or the strange. Some may feel more at home in the weird than in the familiar.

[141] Compare to the pleasure of the sublime, which involve one's elevation above the power of nature. Human beings may thus feel at home in nature (beauty) and also superior to nature (sublime).

has to do with sensory inclinations (as opposed to the sense-free inclinations of taste). An interest in pleasure thus involves identification of oneself as a natural being with certain appetites, an identification of oneself as comfortable or at home as a being with natural appetites. To feel enjoyment is not just to exist in a world as a natural being but is to *inhabit* the world, or to feel at home in the world.

Kant understands enjoyment and pain as the feeling of the promotion and hindrance of life, respectively. Kant's view is that one has an awareness, through feeling, of whether something agrees or disagrees with one's life, and these feelings put one in touch with one's "vital force" (7:231). The satisfaction of any appetite involves an internal natural teleology: enjoyment is something's seeming to be good for me as a living being. Given this relation between enjoyment and pain and natural teleology, a commitment to or interest in enjoyment reflects a commitment to or interest in natural teleology. A commitment to enjoyment is thus a commitment to the promotion of life. Of course, enjoyment and promotion of life can come apart—enjoyment and pain are feelings or seemings that may not accurately reflect whether something truly is good for me. Even so, the feeling of enjoyment and pain just is a sensitivity to whether something is purposive or not. Specifically, enjoyment and pain in the case of natural appetites is a sensitivity to whether something is purposive for animal nature.

VI. Objection: Play Acting a Commitment?

The advantage of understanding the natural appetites as containing an internal natural teleology is that this sort of account avoids the objection that natural teleology is a violation of an agent's autonomy. Kant's view is that any feeling of enjoyment or pain already contains a reference to teleology, so the appeal to the natural teleology of an appetites does not identify some additional commitment that one must adopt. In this way the appeal to natural teleology in

the duties to oneself as an animal being needn't be viewed as imposing external concerns onto an agent.

Still, one might question the strength of the purported commitment to natural teleology. What if it were possible to experience enjoyment or pain in a manner that diverges from natural teleology? The thought is that if one could enjoy something painful, or perhaps find pain in something enjoyable, then this would show that one can experience something enjoyable or painful without being committed to the internal natural teleology of that feeling. Consider cases of thrill seeking such as riding a roller coaster or rock climbing, eating spicy foods, or the experience of sorrow or disgust in literature. These cases identify activities that people seem to enjoy despite the fact that those activities elicit reactions like fear, pain, sorrow, and disgust. But instead of taking these reactions as painful, which urge one to leave one's state, these reactions are often taken as enjoyable and continually pursued. This suggests, against my view, that one can pantomime or play act a commitment to natural teleology in such a way that allows one to experience enjoyment or pain without being committed to the respective natural teleology.

To respond, I think it is important first to recognize the complexity of the cases under discussion.[142] Thrill seeking, at least in most cases, is not the rash pursuit of terrifying experiences. Consider riding a roller coaster. For it to be fun, the roller coaster must be somewhat scary, by going fast, falling from great heights, making sharp turns, going upside down, and so on. These experiences can be scary even for someone who has ridden many roller coasters before. The roller coaster exposes one to a risk of danger, but one has some awareness that they are for the most part safe, assuming for example that there are regulations in place and

[142] The closest Kant comes to discussing something like this is his account of illusion in the context of the transcendental dialectic in the first Critique (A 293/B 249-A 295/B 351) and the passions in the *Anthropology* (7:274-5). Kant's understanding of illusion is to confuse subjective grounds for objective grounds.

inspections occur routinely. The risk of something going wrong is very low, but if something were to happen the consequences would be severe. I take it that this is what makes a roller coaster exciting—it places an activity that is potentially dangerous within a safe framework.[143] It's not as if one enjoys danger or fear as such. Danger and fear serve to heighten the enjoyment of riding the roller coaster. Indeed, a large part of the enjoyment of a rollercoaster is the rush of adrenaline from having survived something dangerous. This suggests that what one enjoys is not the moments that elicit fear—genuine fear, distinct from excitement—but the overcoming of those moments.[144] Those who ride roller coasters exhibit something like bravery in facing up to something that scares them. Typically, before riding a roller coaster one's emotions tend to be a mix of excitement, fear, and nervousness. The mixture of these emotions may perhaps afford greatest enjoyment, at least according to Kant, since he seems to think that alternating states produces the greatest feeling. Fear heightens one's enjoyment, but fear is not what one takes enjoyment in. Hence it would be a mistake to think that in riding a roller coaster one is finding enjoyment in fear.

The case of finding enjoyment in literature that evokes a response of sorrow or disgust also requires further consideration. It seems again that, while on the surface one appears to be enjoying something painful, there is something more going on in these cases. In general, one

[143] Consider Kant's claim that "the virtuous man fears God without being afraid of him, because he does not think of the case of wishing to resist God and his commands as anything that is worrisome for him. But since he does not think of such a case as impossible in itself, he recognizes God as fearful" (5:260-1). Such a description of fear seems to apply well for cases of experienced mountain climbers who respect the power of the mountain but are confident enough to face it without fear.

[144] The following example illustrates what I have in mind when I mention genuine fear. Consider a rock climber making his way up a high wall. He is 100 feet off the ground, and as he reaches for the next hold he slips and begins to fall. Even for an experienced climber who trusts their gear, this is a scary moment. Even if everything holds, he might still be injured as he falls down to his last anchor point. This experience is not enjoyable, at least not at the time. At a later time, he may look back on it and enjoy the experience, but again it seems that what he enjoys is not the experience of falling by itself, but that he fell and survived. While the possibility of falling is what adds to the drama and excitement of climbing, falling is not itself exciting.

may enjoy the experience of any emotion through art, insofar as it demonstrates both the artist's talent for making one feel a certain way, as well as one's capacity for being so moved. In the case of sorrow, one might enjoy a character's response to sorrowful or disgusting circumstances, rather than enjoying the sorrowful or disgusting circumstances themselves. Like the thrill-seeking case, one enjoys the overcoming of those emotions rather than those emotions themselves. In the case of literature, presumably part of what makes enjoyment possible is the relative safety of engaging these emotions through a fictional medium.

The example of enjoying spicy foods in spite of the pain they cause is also more complex than first appears. This example provides the best objection to my claim, since it deals with an actual feeling of pain rather than an emotion, which I take it is more complicated than the feeling of pleasure and displeasure.[145] Enjoyment of spicy foods requires that the food is sufficiently spicy such that one can actually notice the heat, without being too spicy. There are two things to note about this example: eating spicy peppers causes the body to release endorphins, but it is possible to develop a tolerance for spicy foods, meaning that one must seek out hotter and hotter peppers in order to continue one's enjoyment. In the case of someone without a tolerance for spicy foods, a jalapeno may be overwhelmingly painful, while someone who does have a high tolerance for spicy foods might hardly notice the jalapeno's heat. While spicy food is painful, it is not obvious that what one enjoys about spicy food is the pain. One gloss on what occurs when one eats spicy food is that one enjoys the taste of the food and some initial amount of pain from the spice, but then the spice fully hits and one's experience becomes overwhelmingly painful. A comparison to receiving a brain-freeze from eating ice cream too quickly may be apt here. In extreme cases there seems to be very little enjoyment, apart from the moment before one feels

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[145] Additionally, Kant holds that some (though not all) affects "promote health mechanically" (7:261).

the full effect of the spice, or perhaps one enjoys the feeling of the diminishment of pain. It is also important to keep in mind that, like more extreme cases of thrill seeking, some may find enjoyment not in the actual eating of incredibly spicy foods, but rather in being recognized as someone capable of eating incredibly spicy foods.

Consideration of these cases shows, I think, that one cannot play act a commitment to natural teleology in such a way that one could enjoy something without endorsing its natural teleology. On the surface these cases seem to show that one can enjoy things that one ought to find painful, but as I've argued these cases are more complicated than they appear. One can feel enjoyment or pain only by endorsing the relevant natural purpose. Such commitments cannot be play-acted.

VII. Natural Teleology and Contradiction

Enjoyment and pain possess an internal natural teleology as feelings of the promotion and hindrance of life. In the case of the satisfaction of the natural appetites, one's failure to satisfy a natural appetite in accord with its natural teleology is a vice. This is because one's maxim contains a contradiction, where one is both committed and not committed to natural teleology. An upshot of this view is that it should again be clear why I have claimed that an appeal to natural purposes is only appropriate in cases where one acts to satisfy a natural appetite. This is because the presence of natural teleology in one's maxim is the result of one's interest in enjoyment and the avoidance of pain.

This gives rise to a worry about the role for universalization in this account. Kant insists that evaluating a maxim involves examining its ability to stand as a universal law. If a maxim is internally inconsistent, then obviously something has gone wrong. The question is whether this constitutes a moral failure, or a more general failure, perhaps like that of failing to will the means

to one's end. At the same time, there is good reason to expect universalization to work differently in the cases of duties to oneself and duties to others. For starters, it is not obvious that there should be a role for universalization when it comes to duties to oneself, in the way that it is intuitively obvious that universalizability is important when it comes to duties to others. It would be strange to hold that the reason for a maxim's being a violation of a duty to oneself had to do with the inability to universalize the maxim, at least in the same way as in the case of duties to others.

I suggest that universalization is involved in a different way in the case of duties to oneself as an animal being. In the context of natural teleology, the work of universalization is to identify the natural purposes that are essential to animals. Universal contrapurposiveness (never using the predisposition in accord with its natural purpose) with respect to the natural purposes of animal beings would constitute a failure of self-generation. That is, an animal being may be able to generate itself while occasionally failing to meet its natural purposes, but it could not generate itself if those failures were universalized or held as a universal law. As in the case of duties to others, the moral law can be said to possess universality in the sense that it is always wrong to violate the natural purpose of a natural appetite, just as it is always wrong to lie.[146]

At this point I want to return to the concern that the failure in these cases looks more like a failure of instrumental reason than pure practical reason. I think it is somewhat accurate to view these cases as similar to a failure of instrumental reason, since I have maintained that the duties to oneself only apply when one acts from a natural appetite. If one sets out to satisfy a basic animal appetite, then one is bound by natural teleology. The problem is that now this

[146] If this is too controversial, for my purposes it is enough only to point out that duties to oneself and duties to others are on par here, even if the topic of Kant's absolutism is more complicated than what I say here.

supposed duty looks like a hypothetical imperative. As such, it would lack the normative authority of a true duty, since it would not be able to command unconditionally.

It is helpful to pause and consider what is so worrisome about hypothetical imperatives in the first place. Kant claims that hypothetical imperatives are not true commands because of their conditional status. The worry is that one could abscond from one's duty simply by giving up the relevant end. If I decide I want to get in shape, then I have a reason to exercise in the morning. But this reason is only as strong as my commitment to the end of getting in shape, and nothing requires that I continue to hold this end. Similarly, nothing requires that I adopt ends that have to do with satisfying natural appetites. As a matter of empirical fact, most human beings will adopt these ends, but they are not rationally required. So, the duties to oneself as an animal being appear to be mere hypothetical imperatives.

While the duties to oneself as an animal being appear to have the structure of hypothetical imperatives, it's not clear that they realize any of the problems associated with hypothetical imperatives. For starters, the fact that most human beings in fact adopt the satisfaction of their natural appetites as an end is significant. Giving up the ends of animal nature—through chastity, fasting, or temperance, for example—is no simple task. One cannot shed one's identity as an animal being quite as easily as one can give up one's goal to get in shape. This is probably not very surprising, since cases where lapses in one's hypothetical imperatives usually involve giving up on some more difficult task (exercise, eating well, learning to play piano) in favor of an inclination that is easier to satisfy (being lazy, eating junk food, playing video games). It is easy to understand giving up difficult ends in the case of hypothetical imperatives because there are ends that are easier to satisfy or ends that promise more pleasure. But this is not the case for giving up on the ends of animal nature; in fact, the opposite is the case

since giving up on animal nature requires not satisfying the natural appetites. Unlike the ease with which one could give up an end so that one is no longer bound by a hypothetical imperative, giving up the ends of animal nature would be a difficult task that would require a lot of effort over a long time. Kant avoids identifying chastity, fasting, or temperance as virtues, but they certainly require possession of a strong character and are perhaps still praiseworthy in that sense. This rules out the threat of one lazily avoiding the duties to oneself as an animal being by claiming that one has given up the ends of animal nature. One has the ends of animal nature insofar as one seeks satisfaction of a natural appetite. Deciding not to satisfy the natural appetites would be a heroic effort, though Kant regards it as slightly misguided.

I will now consider the status of teleological laws alongside natural laws (laws of nature) and moral laws (laws of freedom). Laws of nature and laws of freedom are both forms of rational cognition that are in Kant's words "concerned with some object," unlike logic which is rational cognition that has to do with the rules of thought in general (independent of determinate objects) (4:387). Such laws can be known a priori, such as the fundamental laws of physics, or the categorical imperative. Teleological laws are a hybrid of natural laws and moral laws. Natural laws come from the understanding, moral laws come from reason, and teleological laws come from the faulty of judgment, which mediates between reason and the understanding (20:202). Like natural laws, teleological laws pertain to what occurs in the natural world. In particular, teleological laws concern the natural purposes of organisms and their parts. Like moral laws, teleological laws are statements about what *ought to* occur. However, like laws of nature, teleological laws are statements about what *will* occur under particular circumstances. For example, the natural purpose of an acorn is to grow into an oak tree: this can also be understood as saying that under the right circumstances—having enough light, the right amount of water,

good soil, and so on—the acorn will grow into an oak tree. Teleological laws are the "lawfullness of the contingent" (5:404). It is possible that the acorn does not grow into an oak tree, but when it does grow into an oak tree it does so in accordance with a law.

I claim that the kind of necessity secured by teleological laws, while not absolute, is nonetheless universal with respect to a particular category of beings, namely, natural beings. While a law that is based in natural teleology will not apply to *all* beings, it will apply to all natural beings. As such, even though they have a more restricted application, teleological laws do not give rise to exceptions. Natural beings are always bound by teleological laws. As discussed earlier, changes in a natural being's life form (the emergence of a new species, for example) will change its evaluation with respect to a species concept, but it is still evaluated according to natural teleology. Perhaps a human being can transcend animal nature by giving up pursuit of natural appetite satisfaction, in which case one's actions would not be evaluated with respect to natural teleology, but it should be clear from what I've said that this does not show that the duties to oneself as an animal being are not categorical imperatives.

According to Kant, duty implies constraint. Human beings are subject to duty because what we want is often not the same as what is right. For someone to transcend their animal nature in such a way that they are no longer bound by natural teleology through the duties to oneself as an animal being, one would have to become immune to the influence of the natural desires. Kant seems to think this is at least logically possible, and he appeals to the example of the sage as someone who seems to achieve such a state. The sage would not be subject to the duties to oneself as an animal being, since there are no natural appetites for the sage to constrain. This does not show that the duties to oneself as an animal being are conditional or merely hypothetical any more than the fact that an angel, though subject to some duties, is not alive and

so is not subject to the duty not to commit suicide, would show that the prohibition against suicide is conditional or hypothetical. Hence duty always involves a reference to the nature of a being, insofar as the possibility of constraint depends on the nature of that being. On Kant's technical understanding of what it is to be subject to a duty or command, the duties to oneself as an animal being are, properly speaking, duties. The duties to oneself as an animal being are not hypothetical imperatives, even though on the surface they seem to be.

I want to talk now about the contradiction involved in violating a duty to oneself as an animal being in the context of what this means for an agent. Because while the duties to oneself as an animal being are categorical imperatives, they nonetheless represent something unique, as duties to oneself and as having to do with animal nature. The problem is that violations of these duties seem to presuppose a form of knowledge an agent might not have, in the form of a teleological understanding of herself. In comparison to the rest of our moral knowledge, we seem to have an obscure awareness of the duties to oneself. That is, Kant can give the impression that knowledge of right and wrong is something that most people possess, at least as an incipient understanding of what sorts of actions one should and should not do. The duties to oneself as an animal being are an outlier then, because they presuppose an awareness of natural teleology and this, unless the rest of our moral knowledge, is not obviously a matter of common sense. Violating a duty to oneself as an animal being involves a contradiction though one's commitment to and at the same time rejection of natural teleology. But while we can—and should—be aware of this contradiction, this awareness seems to depend on further, more obscure, knowledge of natural teleology. This is why if one takes the scope of morality to be only rational nature as such, as Korsgaard seems to do, then one will not have much to say about duties to oneself as an animal being. Of course, the contradiction in cases of violations of duties to oneself as an animal

being is a rational failure—it is something that an agent is responsible for. But recognizing this rational failure depends on one's having a certain kind of self-knowledge. And this is why Kant claims that the "first command of all duties to oneself" is to know oneself (6:441). Since one has a duty to know oneself, and in particular to have moral cognition of oneself, one is not excused for not attending to what one is committed to when one acts.

The natural appetites have an internal natural teleology. The natural teleology of animal nature is the preservation of life. But in terms of natural teleology preservation is at the same time *perfection*: consider Kant's claim that the duties to oneself can be summarized as the command to "preserve yourself in the perfection of your nature" (6:419). For animals and organisms, existence is a kind of striving. Contrapurposiveness with respect to a natural purpose is the failure to perfect oneself, which in the language of teleology is just the failure to be what one is. And while natural teleology is not as much a part of common sense as, say, most ordinary moral knowledge, one can't claim ignorance in the case of one's actions. One has a duty to know whether one is acting from an impulse of nature, and what this implies for the human being.

VIII. Conclusion

At first glance Kant's appeal to natural teleology appears to be a non-starter, given the obvious way in which it seems to conflict with human freedom. I have argued that a more promising explanation can be given on the grounds that enjoyment and pain possess an internal natural teleology. Kant's claim that actions that aim at the satisfaction of the natural appetites are to be evaluated with respect to natural purposes thus does not impose any external commitment onto a moral agent already committed to satisfying a natural appetite. Though it is not without issue, I think this offers the best account of Kant's appeal to natural teleology.

CONCLUSION

The duties to oneself as an animal being represent a positive contribution to morality from animal nature, in virtue of the teleology of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Kant denies that feeling or emotion can play a foundational role in the grounding of the moral law, but it does not follow that feeling is thus unimportant. By characterizing pleasure and displeasure as the feeling of the promotion and hindrance of life, Kant identifies feeling as a primitive form of judgment about what is and is not good for one's form of life.

Duties to oneself are duties of perfection. In the case of duties to oneself as an animal being, one is commanded to strive for perfection as an animal being, at least insofar as one acts from the natural impulses. There is nothing problematic about this sort of appeal to natural teleology, since pleasure and displeasure are teleologically structured feelings to begin with. Moreover, this way of understanding the duties to oneself as an animal being does not give rise to a more general worry about attributing a life-form to the human being, since natural teleology only commands in cases where one is already engaged in natural appetite satisfaction. One is not required to pursue animal ends, but if one does, one must do so in a manner that accords with the natural teleology of those appetites.

A teleological approach to the duties to oneself as an animal being shows that these duties are limited to cases of natural appetite satisfaction. One upshot is that this account provides a glimpse of how Kant actually thought about how various moral and non-moral concerns are integrated into a human life. Cases where one acts in such a way that seems to violate a duty to oneself, but in which one's motive is not a natural appetite but is rather a more social desire, suggest a kind of structure or hierarchy, at least in the sense that natural teleological standards are limited to cases of natural appetite satisfaction. But duties to oneself as

an animal being are only one kind of duty to oneself. Kant also holds that there are duties to oneself as a moral being. Duties to oneself are "directly contrary to his character as a moral being (in terms of its very form)" (6:420). One possible concern with my strategy of understanding these duties as teleological is that there is a disanalogy between duties to oneself as an animal being and duties to oneself as a moral being, in that the latter do not involve natural teleology. This would be surprising because Kant's remarks characterize these sets of duties to oneself as broadly similar. Both duties to oneself as an animal being and duties to oneself as a moral being concern the "preservation of his nature in its perfection" (6:419). One possibility for future research would be to examine the duties to oneself as a moral being, and in particular the vices corresponding to those duties, in terms of their relation to our moral character. These vices are "lying, avarice, and false humility (servility)," and the virtue opposing these vices is "love of honor," which Kant distinguishes from mere ambition (6:420).

I have argued that, at least for Kant, the duties to oneself seem to require some conception of the nature of the being in question. This nature, even in the case of the duties to oneself as a moral being, seems to go beyond a characterization of the being as merely rational or reflective. The idea that there are duties to oneself is an ancient idea, and Kant seems to share Plato's belief that self-knowledge is the starting point of duties to oneself.

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