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# Morality and the God of Reason

Universiteit Utrecht  
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## **Inaugural Adress**

Inaugural lecture delivered on March 30, 2009 on the occasion of accepting the chair of visiting professor at the Faculty of Humanities at Utrecht University.

Dear Rector Magnificus, friends, colleagues, ladies and gentleman, It is a great honour for me to occupy the position Utrecht University has awarded me, which gives me the opportunity to address you today on a subject very close to my heart.

Immanuel Kant famously and cogently argued that it is impossible to *know* whether or not God (an omnipotent, perfectly good being) exists.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, he maintained that God's existence is 'postulated' by commitment to the moral law.<sup>2</sup> Given that Kant contended that the moral law is 'connected (completely *a priori*) with the concept of the will of a rational being as such',<sup>3</sup> he held that belief in God is rationally *necessary* in the strictest sense. Rational beings with a will (i.e., agents, who pursue ends that they treat as reasons for their actions), contradict that they are agents if they do not consider themselves bound by the moral law.<sup>4</sup> In Gewirthian terms,<sup>5</sup> the moral law is 'dialectically necessary' for agents. Consequently, agents must believe that God exists not only to be consistent with any commitment to the moral law they might have, but in order to be consistent with the very idea that they are agents. Hence, while theoretical reason requires us to be agnostics, pure practical reason requires us to be theists.

As a Gewirthian,<sup>6</sup> I share Kant's conviction that there is a dialectically necessary moral principle,<sup>7</sup> 'the Principle of Generic Consistency' (PGC),<sup>8</sup> which is distinct from any of Kant's formulae for the moral law.<sup>9</sup> However, since Kant's 'moral argument for God' rests on the idea that morality is categorically binding rather than on its content, if his reasoning is sound the dialectical necessity of the PGC renders belief in God just as dialectically necessary as Kant would have us believe.

I, like others before me,<sup>10</sup> find Kant's argument for 'practical theism' wanting. However, I will argue that commitment to the moral law at least requires agents to hope that God exists, which entails that commitment to the moral law is incompatible with atheism. Kant, of course, agrees. But, contrary to Kant, I will argue not only that theism is not positively supported by commitment to the moral law, but that, regardless of whether it is held on a theoretical or a practical basis, it is just as antithetical to morality as Kant held both dogmatic atheism (the claim to *know* that God does not exist) and dogmatic theism (the claim

to *know* that God exists) to be. I will conclude with some schematic thoughts on the implications of my analysis for Kant's ideas of human dignity, freedom, and the nature of pure practical reason.

## Kant's Argument for Practical Theism

I understand Kant's argument, which is presented most clearly in the *Critique of Practical Reason*,<sup>11</sup> to be as follows.

- (1) If the moral law were fully complied with and never violated, happiness and worthiness for it would be in complete harmony. Such a state is the '*summum bonum*,' the highest good.
- (2) The moral law 'postulates' the *summum bonum*: i.e., under the moral law, the *summum bonum* is the 'final' end of all action, the state-of-affairs that, ideally, ought to exist.
- (3) The moral law requires all agents not only to want the *summum bonum* to be realized; it requires them to do whatever they can to bring it about. In other words, the *summum bonum* is a necessary object of the will.
- (4) Unless God exists (and agents are immortal),<sup>12</sup> the *summum bonum* is unrealizable.<sup>13</sup>
- (5) Since "'ought" implies "can,"' the moral law may prescribe that agents pursue the *summum bonum* only on the assumption that God exists.  
Therefore
- (6) Any agent who regards himself or herself as bound by the moral law ought, in consistency with this commitment, to believe that God exists.

Combined with Kant's view that commitment to the moral law is a requirement of pure practical reason (a dialectically necessary requirement), this result is sufficient to ground practical theism, the thesis that it is dialectically necessary for agents to believe that God exists.

It must be emphasized that Kant does not think that this demonstrates 'God exists' to be a true proposition.<sup>14</sup> He maintains that practical

reason requires agents to have '*faith*' that God exists; but agents do not, as a result, *know* that God exists.<sup>15</sup> In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant states that God's existence is certain, but this certainty is moral certainty not logical certainty.<sup>16</sup> The certainty and the morality of the requirement can be separated. When Kant says that belief in God's existence is certain, I take him to mean that it is rationally necessary as a requirement of pure practical reason, rationally necessary for agents, *qua* thinking of themselves as agents, to believe that God exists. However, since the requirement to believe that God exists is driven by the moral law (as a requirement of pure practical reason), Kant must also claim that agents *morally* ought to believe that God exists, which makes it wholly unsurprising that in *The Metaphysics of Morals*, he declares that 'to have religion is a duty of man to himself.'<sup>17</sup> In other words, the moral law generates a maxim, 'Will that there be a God!' which is to say, 'Act as if there were a God!'<sup>18</sup> meaning, 'Act on the presumption that existence has the *summum bonum* as its purpose!'.

### **Critique of Kant's Argument**

The central defect in the argument is obvious: (3) is false because the *summum bonum* is not commanded by the moral law. The judgment that the *summum bonum* ought to be is not a *command for action*, but an 'ought' of evaluation: realization of the *summum bonum* is *good for finite agents* not a *duty of finite agents* precisely because it is not within their power (individually or collectively) to bring it about. What the moral law can and does command is only that finite agents themselves act in accordance with the moral law, which they can do, whether or not God exists. In the words of Lewis White-Beck, the moral law 'as an imperative . . . is a command only that we seek virtue, let the eschatological chips fall as they may.'<sup>19</sup>

Consequently, (3) must be replaced with something like

- (3)' Under the moral law, all agents must want the *summum bonum* to be realized *and* act consistently with this end being realized (i.e., do nothing that is contrary to its being realized), for the states of affairs they ought to desire and the ends they ought to pursue ought to be in harmony. *In this sense only* is the *summum bonum* a necessary object of the will.

*In this sense*, too, God is a necessary object of the will; but *if only in this sense*, this means no more than that, under the moral law, agents must have a positive attitude towards God's existence. With the moral law being dialectically necessary, it follows only that it is dialectically necessary for agents *to want* God to exist. Of course, *if* the world, in the cosmological order of things, is ordered as pure practical reason dictates it ideally ought to be, then God must exist. However, only if reason requires agents to think that the world is necessarily ordered as it ought to be, does it follow that reason requires agents to believe that God exists. But, conversely, unless we *know* that God exists, we have no good reason to suppose that the world is necessarily ordered as it ought to be. There is a circularity here that cannot be broken.

### **Rational Agents Must Hope that God Exists**

Suppose now, as Kant declares, that God's existence can neither be proved nor disproved. On such a basis it is, surely, a mistake to conclude from the criticism just voiced that commitment to the moral law is neutral with respect to what agents may believe about God's existence.

To want something to be the case whilst being unsure whether or not it is the case, though acknowledging that it *might or might not* be case, is to hope that it is the case. If I want something to happen and believe that it will happen, then I do not hope it will happen, I expect or anticipate that it will happen. If I expect something to happen and it does not then I was wrong to expect it to happen. On the other hand, if I hope that something will happen and it does not, it does not follow that I was wrong to hope that it would happen. If I believed that it would not or could not happen I would be wrongly characterized



as hoping that it would happen. If I want it to happen but believe it will not or cannot happen, then I am correctly characterized as being resigned to it not happening or despairing of it happening. Only if I believed it would or could happen, but in fact it could not, would I have been mistaken to hope that it would happen.

In the case at hand, we are to assume that agents rationally must want God to exist (it is dialectically necessary for them to want God to exist) and that theoretical reason *cannot* justify the proposition that God does not exist. On this basis, it is dialectically necessary for *rational* agents (those determined not to act on beliefs that *cannot* be justified) to hope that God exists, and to do no more than hope that God exists. From this it follows that it is dialectically necessary for *rational* agents to be agnostics (who believe only that God might or might not exist), and not to be either theists (who believe that God exists) or atheists (who believe that God does not exist).

Does it, however, follow from this that it is dialectically necessary for agents *per se* to be agnostics? It might be claimed that it does not, because these reflections do not establish that it is dialectically necessary for agents *per se* to hope that God exists. And this is because it has not been shown to be *dialectically necessary* for agents to neither believe nor disbelieve that God exists. The required agnosticism has been imported from theoretical reason.

In order to show that agnosticism is dialectically necessary, this objection must be countered.

### **The Dialectical Necessity of Agnosticism**

One possible response to this objection is to claim that “‘ought” implies can’ does apply to “‘oughts” of evaluation,’ though with different effect to action-guiding ‘oughts.’

If, contrary to what is in fact the case, pure practical reason were to *prescribe* that agents ought to pursue the *summum bonum*, then it would have to be supposed that the conditions necessary for the *summum*

*bonum* to be achievable *actually* exist. But, as already noted, we cannot infer from the fact that pure practical reason *judges* that the *summum bonum* ideally ought to be achievable, that the conditions necessary for the *summum bonum* to be achievable *actually* apply.

It is important that while it is true either that God exists or that God does not exist, *in the modality of belief*, the statement, ‘God exists’ is not the unique negation of the statement, ‘God does not exist.’ To hold, ‘I neither affirm nor deny that God exists’ (i.e., ‘I believe that is possible that God exists, but also that it is possible that God does not exist’) is also a negation of both ‘I believe that God does not exist’ and ‘I believe that God exists.’ Now, to believe that God does not exist is to close off (subjectively) the possibility of the *summum bonum* being achievable, implying, if this is rationally permissible, that pure practical reason can require agents to want something to happen that can’t possibly happen. While it is not self-contradictory for agents to want the impossible, it is another matter altogether for pure practical reason to require them to want the impossible. In the modality of belief, “ought to be” implies ‘not impossible to be,’ which, in the case at hand, is satisfied by agnosticism and theism but not by atheism.

This, however, does not render agnosticism dialectically necessary. By itself, it only renders it dialectically necessary to reject atheism, and leaves both agnosticism and theism as dialectically permissible possibilities.<sup>20</sup>

There are other considerations, however, that show that only agnosticism is dialectically permissible.

Kant insisted that existence of the moral law (that there is a categorically binding principle for action) is not known on the basis of religious belief. Not only was he confident that agents know that they are bound by the moral law on purely *a priori* grounds (on the basis of the dialectical necessity of the moral law), he was adamant that the only basis we have for the idea that God as omnipotent and perfectly good is the moral law.<sup>21</sup> So, for Kant, God existence is not a transcendental condition of the possibility of morality, but an inference from the existence of morality.

As such, anything we say about God must be consistent with the transcendental conditions of the possibility of morality.

Now, amongst these conditions are those that are necessary for morality to be intelligible., and Kant was himself very much aware that intelligible subjects and objects of the moral law, viewed as an imperative, must be vulnerable in at least two senses. They must

- I        Be able to view themselves as capable of being harmed.<sup>22</sup>
- II       Be capable of doing both what reason demands of them and of failing to do so.<sup>23</sup>

In addition, they must

- III      Be capable of viewing moral demands as categorically binding and following them for the reason that they view them as such.<sup>24</sup>

Anything that interferes with these conditions must be seen as antithetical to morality. Now, just as Kant tries to convince us to be practical theists, he asks us to reject dogmatic theism (theism based on the idea that we can know that God exists) as strongly as he rejects dogmatic atheism, not merely on theoretical grounds, but on moral ones!

If we knew that God exists, says Kant,

Most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, few would be done from hope, none from duty. The moral worth of actions . . . would not exist at all. The conduct of man, so long as his nature remained as it now is, would be changed into mere mechanism.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, our freedom would be overwhelmed. We would obey not because reason requires us to do so, but solely out of duress. Those who were even momentarily tempted to transgress would display a lack of reason that would excuse them from responsibility for their actions.

In short, dogmatic theism must be rejected because it conflicts with condition III (and perhaps II as well).

Mind you, Kant operates with a rather stern image of God, as the Omnipotent Judge, a wielder of punishment for transgressing the law from which there is no escape. Perhaps, he should work with a different image. God, after all, is, by definition, all loving and all wise, and fully cognizant of all our imperfections. Such a God would surely not subject his vulnerable and fallible creations to *eternal* damnation for *anything* they might do. Ultimately, eternal salvation for all must eventually be secured as part of the *summum bonum*. But surely, if we know this then what are we to make of our responsibility? In the end, as Leibniz declared, everything must be for the best in this best of all possible worlds.<sup>26</sup> The idea that what we do can make a difference to the ultimate order of things becomes ephemeral. The bringing about of the *summum bonum* is God's responsibility, not ours. Our only responsibility is to act in accord with the moral law. But that is not enough to bring about the *summum bonum*. Indeed, it cannot even be necessary, for God must, by definition, bring about the *summum bonum* no matter what. So, this scenario challenges transcendental condition III by casting doubt on the idea that the moral law can be of categorical significance as an imperative. In addition, it challenges transcendental condition I, for it requires all 'harms' suffered to be justified as being for the best in the best of all possible worlds. And with the *summum bonum* involving eternal salvation and full redress, its achievement must constitute nothing less than the end of all harm and the end of any further need for the moral law. In short, from the perspective of the achieved *summum bonum* there can be no moral harms at all.

What then of dogmatic atheism?

According to Kant, 'a righteous man (like Spinoza) who takes himself to be firmly convinced that there is no God' (and no future life)<sup>27</sup> must, in the final analysis, view himself not as an end-in-itself (as the moral law requires), but as destined for 'the abyss of the purposeless chaos of matter.' The consequence can only be 'to weaken the respect, by which the moral law immediately influences him to obedience, by the nullity of the only idealistic final end that is adequate to its high demand

(which cannot occur without damage to the moral disposition).<sup>28</sup>

It must be noted immediately that this applies to atheism only and not to agnosticism. The agnostic does not deny that God exists, and so does not deny that the *summum bonum* is realizable. The agnostic, therefore, does not expect, anticipate, or believe that human existence is purposeless, that the *summum bonum* is a nullity. The agnostic *fears* that human existence is purposeless, *hopes* that it is not, and has *no expectation* that it either is or is not. The agnostic acknowledges the command of the moral law to treat all agents as ends-in-themselves, sees agents' earnest endeavours to comply with the moral law as necessary, but not sufficient, for the attainment of the *summum bonum* and simply suspends belief about whether what would be sufficient exists.

That said, is Kant right that dogmatic atheism threatens the 'moral disposition'? It depends on why we must respect the moral law. In the first instance, the answer is that it is a categorical command of pure practical reason. However, this only raises the question, 'Why should I respect reason?' Whatever positive answer is to be given to this, Kant seems to suggest that pure practical reason is not worthy of respect if it requires us to want that which cannot be achieved, or more generally, if the world is not ordered as it ought in reason to be. If so, it leads to the following thought. In reason, agents categorically ought to act in certain ways, correlative to which the world ideally ought to be ordered in a certain way. If the world is not so ordered, then this does not affect the fact that reason requires agents to act morally, but it raises questions about the *significance* of what reason requires, questions about why agents should care *above all else* about what reason requires. In other words, it, too, challenges transcendental condition III. If this is not what Kant is getting at, then, I confess, I do not understand him. If this is what he is suggesting, then his contention is fully in line with the reasoning I have employed above to argue that it is dialectically necessary to reject atheism.

In brief, the problem with dogmatic atheism and theism is that both render appropriate subjective attitudes that conflict with one of the transcendental conditions for morality to be possible.

But now we must ask why Kant should think that theoretical knowledge of God is antithetical to morality but moral faith in God is not. After all, both the dogmatic theist and the practical theist believe that God exists, and it is their common belief that generates their attitudes, not the truth or otherwise of their belief. That the practical theist admits (indeed, insists) that the reasons for his or her belief do not establish it as true does not alter the fact that the belief is a belief that God exists. Indeed, if it really is the belief that God exists then it must be the belief that the statement “God exists” is true, whether or not this can be justified by practical reason. Furthermore, Kant seems to accept this by saying that a postulate is ‘a theoretical proposition which is not as such demonstrable.’<sup>29</sup> To be sure, what this requires me to do is to act *as if* God exists,<sup>30</sup> but that helps his cause not one iota. To act as if God exists is to adopt certain attitudes, and attach certain meanings to the cosmological order of things and one’s place in it that are appropriate on the assumption that God exists, and it is just because certain attitudes are appropriate (or at least not inappropriate) to dogmatic theism that renders it antithetical to morality.

We must conclude that if Kant is right about dogmatic theism (and atheism) (and I think that he is) then his critique applies equally to practical theism. It is, therefore, dialectically necessary to be an agnostic, but not *just* an agnostic. It is dialectically necessary to be an agnostic with a positive attitude towards the idea of the existence of God, to be an agnostic who hopes that God exists.

In the Preface to the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant proclaims, ‘I have found it necessary to deny *knowledge* [of God, freedom and immortality] in order to make room for *faith*.’<sup>31</sup> He should, instead, have said, ‘I have found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for *hope*.’

At this point, I am reminded of what Kant says about hope in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. There he characterizes ‘hoping’ as standing ‘in the same relation to the practical and the law of morality as *knowing* and the law of nature to the theoretical knowledge of things,’ and he

declares that hoping ‘arrives . . . at the conclusion that *something is . . . because something ought to happen*’ as against ‘that *something is . . . because something happens*.’<sup>32</sup>

This is ambiguous. What he seems to say is that ‘X hopes that y will be the case’ means ‘X believes that y is the case because z ought to be the case.’ This might be consistent with the way in which he tries to justify the postulate that God exists; but it is clearly invalid, and also deploys an idiosyncratic use of the word ‘hope.’

However, what Kant probably intends is only that a state-of-affairs becomes an object of hope by being necessary for something to happen that ought to happen. If so, his use of the word ‘hope’ is fully consistent with the way in which I have employed it. But if we then take seriously the idea that hope stands to practical reason as knowledge to theoretical reason, we must re-read Kant’s practical theism in these terms. If we do this, his practical theism will not involve belief that God exists, merely hope that God exists and his position will become very similar to the one I have argued for.

### **Some Schematic Implications**

The notion of autonomy (or freedom) is, of course, at the centre of Kant’s moral philosophy. As Kant argues for the moral law, given his view that the moral law is the only possible law of freely-willed actions, it is agents’ phenomenological sense that they are the authors of their own actions, that they act *independently* of the laws of nature (and therefore have free-will), that renders it dialectically necessary for them to accept the moral law. Associated with this, Kant sees agents’ capacity for free-will (for action under the moral law) as the basis of human dignity (viewed as the property by virtue of which agents owe duties to other agents and themselves and are owed moral concern and respect by other agents). Kant’s idea that the moral law binds agents *independently* of any particular contingent ends that they might wish to pursue, is inseparably connected to this; it is for this reason that Kant’s notion of pure practical reason (as reason that applies to agents

as such) requires a presupposition of free-will. And it is this kind of independence from all considerations of heteronomy that leads Kant to think of agents as inhabiting two worlds, the empirically perceivable world governed by laws of cause and effect, and the intelligible world governed by the moral law.

The importance of this duality to Kant's philosophy cannot be exaggerated. At root, all of his critical philosophy is an attempt to rationalize the phenomenology of human existence, the sense we have, through our possession of reason, that we are finite beings existing in a spatio-temporal world devoid of all meaning, yet at the same time, in possessing reason, being unable not to attach meaning to our actions, and by extension to the world (which is, thereby rendered intelligible). But, if we assume that both worlds are real, then we are confronted with a series of antinomies: e.g.,

atheism *ν* theism;  
determinism *ν* free-will;  
our mortality *ν* our immortality;  
a meaningless cosmological order *ν* a meaningful  
cosmological order.

These antinomies must be resolved, as reason cannot tolerate contradiction. In its purest form, the transcendental philosophy resolves them at the theoretical level by not permitting us to assume either 'world' to be real. They are to be treated not as ontological categories but as phenomenological-epistemological ones. Viewed as ontologies, we must be sceptics about all these antinomies. At the practical level, on the back of the dialectical necessity of morality, however, he comes down firmly on the side of theism, free-will, immortality, and cosmic meaningfulness. In so doing, I believe that he goes contrary to basic tenets of the transcendental philosophy concerning the relationship between theoretical and practical reason in ways that are beyond the scope of this lecture. The immanent critique I have provided, here, has been less radical than this. My charge has been that by invalidly inferring the dialectical necessity of practical theism, Kant forgets that morality is not intelligible without fear of harm. In order for morality to be intelligible, the antinomies must be ontologically bracketed at the practical as well as at the theoretical level. To sustain this, however,



we need a different notion of pure practical reason from the one Kant employs. Such a notion is provided by Gewirth, who does not derive the moral law from a presupposition of free-will, but from the notion of needs for their contingent purposes that all agents necessarily have because they are needed regardless of what the ends for action in view might be. The notion of pure practical reason here resides, in the first instance, in the idea that there are categorical *instrumental* values. Correlated with this, for Gewirthians, human dignity does not reside in Kantian autonomy, but in the capacity for frustration of valued goals, and ultimately fear of death coupled with hope for meaning beyond death that locates the transcendental conditions of morality in the phenomenological duality finite reasoning beings are inherently subject to.

I shall end on a highly cryptic note.

Autonomy, insofar as a theory of morality needs this notion, does not consist in freedom from the 'natural world'. Responsibility and freedom do not arise from membership of the 'intelligible world'. Nor are they, if they exist at all, merely epiphenomenal aspects of a material world. They arise from our ability to use reason to distance ourselves from ontologising our idea of either the material or the intelligible possible worlds. So, as far as religion goes, far from it being the case that religion is a duty agents owe to themselves, agents should conclude that if God (wholly unknowably) exists then God (as the supreme embodiment of reason) not only cannot want them to be theists, God must positively want agents to be agnostics as the only stance consistent with their freedom under the moral law!



## Notes

- 1 See *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781 A, 1787 B) A742, B 770 and A592–630, B 617–658. I have used the translation by Norman Kemp Smith (1968) London: Macmillan.
- 2 For which he provided a number of formulae, the best known of which are the Formula of Universal Law: 'I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law' (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* 1785, 4:402, trans. Mary Gregor (1997) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [15]) and the Formula of Humanity, 'So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means' (ibid. 4:429 [38]).
- 3 Ibid. 4:426 [35].
- 4 Ibid. 4:448 [53–54].
- 5 See Alan Gewirth, *Reason and Morality* (1978) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 6 See, e.g., Deryck Beyleveld, *The Dialectical Necessity of Morality: An Analysis and Defense of Alan Gewirth's Argument for the Principle of Generic Consistency* (1991) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- 7 Gewirth defines a moral principle as a categorically binding other-regarding one (see op.cit. n 5 supra, 1).
- 8 'Act in accord with the generic rights of all agents,' the generic rights being rights to generic conditions of agency, which are conditions the absence of which prevents, to at least some extent, an agent from being able to act at all or to act with any general chances of success, regardless of the purposes being pursued.
- 9 See Deryck Beyleveld and Roger Brownsword, *Human Dignity in Bioethics and Biolaw* (2001) Oxford: Oxford University Press, Ch.5 for the relationship between the PGC and Kant's formulae.
- 10 Notably, Lewis White-Beck in *A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason* (1960) Chicago: University of Chicago Press (see especially, 245, 253, and 275.)
- 11 1788. I have used the translation by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott in *Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics* (1873) London: Longmans, Green, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. 1909, reprinted 1954. Page numbers cited refer to the German Academy edition. Numbers in brackets refer to the page numbers in the translation.
- 12 To simplify presentation, I will not repeat the immortality condition, but take it as read.
- 13 I think this claim is correct, but I will not attempt to defend it here.
- 14 *Critique of Practical Reason* 122 [219].
- 15 *Critique of Practical Reason* 126 [223]; *Critique of Pure Reason* A 828–829 B 856–857.
- 16 A 829 B 857.
- 17 1797, 444. I have used the translation by Mary Gregor (1991) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [238]. This duty is to recognize all moral duties as divine commands (see ibid. 443 [238]).
- 18 *Critique of Practical Reason* 143 [241]).
- 19 Op. cit. (n 10 supra) 275.
- 20 This is essentially the argument for this conclusion presented in *Human Dignity in*

*Bioethics and Biolaw* (op. cit. n.9 supra) 136. I confess that the presentation there is altogether too elliptical.

- 21 *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* 4:408–409.
- 22 Kant has surprisingly little to say about this, but recognition of it is at least implicit in Kant's depiction of the 'starry heavens above' as symbolizing a material world devoid of meaning and thereby threatening to annihilate not only our physical selves but any pretensions to significance we might have. See *Critique of Practical Reason* 161 [260].
- 23 *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* 4:414.
- 24 E.g., *ibid.* 4:400, 401 and 404.
- 25 *Critique of Practical Reason* 147 [245]
- 26 *Philosophical Writings*, trans. Mary Morris (1934) London: Dent Dutton, 27.
- 27 *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (1790) 5:452. I have used the translation by Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (2000) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 28 *Ibid* 5:452–453.
- 29 *Critique of Practical Reason* 122 [219].
- 30 *Ibid.* 143 (241).
- 31 B xxx.
- 32 A 805–806 B 833– 834.

## Curriculum Vitae

Deryck Beyleveld was born in Johannesburg, South Africa on 4 February 1947. He studied biochemistry at the University of the Witwatersrand from which he received a BSc in 1967. He taught mathematics, biology and physical science at Jeppe Boy's High School in Johannesburg before going to the University of Cambridge to study philosophy and social and political science in 1969, from which he received a BA in 1971. He obtained his PhD under the supervision of the late Martin Hollis and Bryan Heading on the *Epistemological Foundations of Sociological Theory* from the University of East Anglia in 1976. During 1976 and 1977 he held a post-doctoral research post in the University of Cambridge Institute of Criminology, under contract to conduct a methodological review of all work done on the deterrence of criminals for the British Home Office, which was later published as *A Bibliography on General Deterrence* (Saxon House 1980). From 1977-1978 he was Lecturer in Philosophy at Bradford College and, in 1978, he was appointed Lecturer in Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies at the University of Sheffield. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1982, and to Reader in the Philosophy of Law in 1986, following publication of *Law as a Moral Judgment* (Sweet and Maxwell 1986, Sheffield Academic Press 1994), a modern secular natural law theory based on the moral theory of Alana Gewirth, co-authored by Roger Brownsword. He then wrote *The Dialectical Necessity of Morality* (Chicago University Press 1991), a through analysis and defence of Alana Gewirth's argument for the Principle of Generic Consistency as the supreme principle of morality (and, indeed, of practical reason generally). In, 1992 he and his co-author Roger Brownsword were asked by the Director of the Common Law Institute of Intellectual Property in London to comment on Articles 53a and 53b of the European Patent Convention. This led to the writing of *Mice, Morality and Patents* (The Common Law Institute of Intellectual Property, 1993), which awakened his interest in bioethics. In 1993 he founded the Sheffield Institute of Biotechnological Law and Ethics (SIBLE), which he directed until he left Sheffield in 2006. He received a Personal Chair in Jurisprudence from the University of Sheffield in 1995. During the remainder of his period in Sheffield he wrote (with Roger Brownsword) *Human Dignity in Bioethics and Biolaw* (Oxford University Press 2001) and *Consent in the Law* (Hart

2007), both of which apply Gewirthian moral theory.. He spent 3 months at the end of 2006 as the Belle van Zuylen Visiting Professor of Human Rights and Bioethics at the University of Utrecht, having been appointed Professor of Law and Bioethics at Durham University in September 2006. While he was Director of SIBLE, he participated in many European concerted actions, and co-ordinated a project on Privacy in Research Ethics and Law (PRIVIREAL) from 2003-2006 (in relation to which he co-edited 3 books published by Ashgate). From 1997 until 2006 he was Vice-Chair of the Trent Region Multi-Centre Research Ethics Committee. He has published many academic papers in criminology, sociological theory, a large number of areas of law, ranging from contract law, property law, product liability law, intellectual property, medical law, data protection law, biotechnology law and regulation, and human rights, as well as in moral epistemology and applied ethics over a wide-range of topics not confined to bioethics. His current research interests include writing a book on *Precautionary Reasoning in Law* with Roger Brownsword, and (as always) applying Gewirthian moral theory to a wide range of issues, especially in law and regulation of biotechnology and medical research. He has a particular interest in the relationships between Kantian and Gewirthian Moral Theory and is embarking on a project aimed at reconstructing many parts of Kantian Transcendental Philosophy from a Gewirthian epistemological perspective (of which his inaugural lecture forms a part). He was appointed Visiting Professor in Moral Philosophy and Applied Ethics at the University of Utrecht in January 2008 alongside his Professorship in Durham. 20% of his time is devoted to Utrecht and 80% to Durham.

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