

Respect for Humanity

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I. BASIC RESPECT AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

1. *Prologue*

History echoes with passionate pleas for *justice* and *charity*, but in our times, increasingly, what we hear are demands for *respect*. In a world where interests are diverse and often conflicting, justice is needed to assure each person a reasonable prospect of security, liberty, and other basic conditions of a tolerable life. Charity can fill gaps, rendering aid that cannot be demanded as a right and ameliorating the harmful consequences when justice fails. Respect, as a moral ideal, answers to a deep and pervasive human need beyond the more concrete needs that characteristically lead to demands for justice and charity.¹ Even though they have long benefited from charity and have now won concessions to their just demands, people stigmatized as inferior may still feel, quite rightly, that they “get no respect.” The respect that they want is something more than material benefits, more even than such benefits offered in a charitable spirit or from recognition that they are owed. What they want, I believe, is something to which we should

What I present here is a slightly revised version of Tanner Lectures given at Stanford in April 1994. I am grateful to those who were responsible for making that opportunity possible, especially Obert Clark Tanner and Grace Adams Tanner, the trustees of the Tanner Lectures, its director, Grethe Peterson, and officials at Stanford University, notably President Gerhard Casper, Susan Okin, and Michael Bratman. Barbara Herman and Jeffrie Murphy, as expected, provided encouragement and constructive suggestions as well as acute and insightful criticisms, which were highlights of the occasion. I also want to thank the audience at the lectures and participants in the accompanying seminars for their challenging, but respectful, comments. I regret the long delay in making these lectures available for publication and apologize to all concerned, especially given that I never managed to do the more extensive revisions for the sake of which I postponed timely publication.

¹ Justice, charity, and respect are different concepts, none of which reduces to the other, but this is not to deny that they can overlap in various ways. All of these may recommend the same course of action on a given occasion, for example, and one important way to demonstrate respect is to grant another person (willingly and for the right reasons) what he or she is owed in justice.

presume every human being has a claim, namely, full recognition as a person, with the same basic moral worth as any other, co-membership in the community whose members share the authority to determine how things ought to be and the power to influence how they will be.²

The long and ugly history of struggles against racial bigotry, gender oppression, and cultural imperialism seems to reveal an unfortunate pattern. Deep injustices, once partially hidden by the conspicuous but inadequate charity of the privileged, become more glaring, and so the less privileged increasingly demand their *rights* rather than hope for generosity. But, unfortunately, as major battles for justice are won, mutual respect is slow to follow. For example, slavery was replaced by official segregation, and this in turn has given way to greater legal equality for African Americans; but the struggle has left a nasty residue of racial contempt. Legal disregard for women has been partially overcome, and other unjust social barriers to women may be yielding to protest; but here, again, victories for justice are often followed by a backlash of mutual contempt rather than an increase of respect. Unabashed colonial exploitation commonly passes over into a phase of hypocritical paternalism, which, under pressure, then retreats to a more distant indifference to the troubles of former colonies left behind. In each sphere, as chances for reconciliation are lost in empty rhetorical exchanges, naive hope and premature trust can easily turn to bitter resentment, cynicism, and ultimately mutual contempt.

Although less angry and violent than the reaction to open enmity, this final *contempt* poses problems that may be even harder to resolve. One can at least confront and respectfully negotiate

² Note that I use here the cautious terms “we should presume” and “a claim,” leaving open for now whether the initial presumption can be overridden and under what conditions one’s “claim” must be fully and immediately honored. Obviously not everyone should now be trusted, without qualification, with the same full rights and responsibilities as persons who are mature, competent, and conscientious adults. Qualifications are needed regarding infants, the mentally incompetent, mass murderers, sociopaths, etc. These special cases will be discussed to some extent in my second lecture.

with a single-minded, unpretending enemy; but contempt is a deep dismissal, a denial of the prospect of reconciliation, a signal that conversation is over. Furious argument and accusation, and even sharp-tongued deflation of hypocrisy and self-deception, leave some space to resume communication; but cold, silent contempt does not. The one demands to be heard, while the other walks away in disgust. Moral argument, however impassioned, is addressed to a person, acknowledged as “one of us”: perhaps delinquent, misbehaving, outrageously deviant from our common standards, but still “one who can be reached,” or so we presume. Increasingly, and sadly, it seems to me, we are in a place and time when, having at last achieved some success in combating the most overt forms of bigotry, oppression, and imperialism, we are in danger of sliding into a stage of mutual contempt and dismissal, affecting all sides of racial, gender, and cultural divides.

But if there is a trend toward separation, dismissal, and contempt, there are also healthy reactions as increasingly minorities make the demand for “respect” their common theme, women refuse to put up with sexual harassment, and university students prod reluctant traditionalists toward greater respect for cultural diversity. This loud and many-sided call for respect loses much of its potential force, however, and even begins to sound thin and trite, when made indiscriminately, without ground or context. “Respect me!” everyone shouts; but if the demand comes from intolerant racist and sexist bigots, one cannot help but doubt its force. Similarly, when the demand comes from a gang member with a knife at your throat, an ideological terrorist, or a student who refuses to read any literature written by Eurocentric white males, then one begins to wonder. Why should I respect everyone? What does respect entail? Is it compatible with deep disagreement and disapproval? Does respect need to be earned? Can it be forfeited? Is respect due to persons *as members of groups* or only *as individuals*? Does proper respect mean refusing to make comparative judgments of merit? On the contrary, are not some writ-

ings trash, some cultural practices immoral, and some people utterly contemptible?

I am not a sociologist or historian, and so it is not my place to identify and analyze social trends; but my impression that we face the broad trends that I have sketched is partly what prompts my current reflections on the ethics of respect for persons. They pose immediate practical problems to which, I believe, some old philosophical ideas are still quite pertinent.

2. *The Project, Theoretical and Practical*

My plan in these lectures is to return to a certain stage in Western intellectual history in order to draw out some ideas that are pertinent to current problems. To do so is to risk both distorting history and offering anachronistic solutions to new problems; but occasionally we can find in old texts bits of wisdom that are worth reshaping for current debates, especially if the problems we face are in fact perennial issues of human conflict in a new guise.

Specifically, the plan is to describe and extend the core of Immanuel Kant's idea of human dignity, with its fundamental requirement of respect for persons. Although Kant himself is often criticized for lapses into dogmatic rigorism, his principle of respect for persons is the product of his deep dissatisfaction with dogmatic, uncritical, and pseudo-scientific moral theories that would impose their parochial norms on a world of richly diverse people, who are capable of critical reflection and making their own choices.³ Respect for persons, Kant realized, presupposes a prac-

³ Although, as I shall argue, Kant's fundamental moral theory is potentially liberating and duly respectful of all persons, in his specific comments on women, unfortunately, he remained a man of his time, taking for granted stereotypes that denied the equal competence and potential intellectual, social, and political independence of women. See, for example, Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 125–26, and various remarks in his *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, trans. John T. Goldwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. Mary Gregor (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974). Kant was also more keenly aware of conflicts between individuals and nations than of deep cultural conflicts and misunderstandings, but again his theory, I believe, is pertinent to the latter as well.

tical conception of persons that must be normatively grounded, systematically developed, and responsive to a realistic (but not cynical) view of the human predicament. It must not merely reflect the substantive norms of particular communities or traditions, for it is needed as a framework for guiding moral reform within cultures and mediating conflicts among them.

As expected in any time-bound philosophy, Kant's ideas come with excess baggage that clear-thinking people cannot easily carry across centuries and continents. So among my tasks will be to propose developments, or modifications, of the initial Kantian ideas to make them more tenable to those who can draw on two hundred more years of experience and philosophical reflection. It is not immodest to suppose that we can propose improvements on venerable ideas from the past; what would be presumptuous is only to suppose that future reflection can never improve on our own proposals. In the present case, the proposals needed are of two kinds: first, that we strip from the core of Kant's ethics certain unnecessary doctrines, no matter how dear to the old man's heart these may have been; and, second, that we render some of Kant's abstractions more concrete, in particular, by augmenting his abstract conception of *free and principle-governed rational agents* with a conception of *culturally embedded social persons* who not so much "create" values as "find" what is valuable to them in their historical contexts. This augmentation of Kant's theory is especially important because it seriously addresses the most persistent source of dissatisfaction with Kantian ethics voiced in recent times.

After sketching, filtering, and augmenting the Kantian idea of basic respect for humanity, I propose to draw out some of its implications regarding the attitudes we should take toward cultural diversity. Here, as we apply the augmented Kantian idea to an urgent contemporary problem, its moral significance should become clearer. In effect, it offers a reasonable ground on which mutually respecting persons can stand, despite deep cultural differences, an intermediate ground between a dogmatic moralism

that would impose all of our values upon everyone and an uncritical relativism that would accept anything, no matter how cruel, in the name of diversity.

In concluding this lecture, I shall venture a few comments on how basic Kantian respect might be relevant to a more immediate issue: How far should the traditional university curriculum be modified in response to the challenge of multiculturalism? In my second lecture I sketch more fully the Kantian grounds for respect for persons and address the particular question, Why shouldn't we say that criminals and bigots, and others we perceive as immoral, have *forfeited* all respect as human beings?

The practical problems raised here are major, complex problems in the real world, and so, one may wonder, what has *philosophy* to do with them? Obviously, mere thinking will not make the problems disappear. Nor does one presume, when offering philosophical reflections, that everyone will be convinced. The major questions that moral philosophy addresses are, in the end, normative ones that each of us must answer for ourselves. They ask, Where should a reasonable person stand? on various issues, and Why? One obvious reason that moral philosophy cannot eliminate concrete problems, such as bigotry and intolerance, is that it can never make itself heard beyond a limited audience; but even when serious people listen, it has no magical power to coerce assent. At best, by doing moral philosophy one can offer *others* only the product of one's efforts to think through normative problems honestly and clearly, together with a commitment to live by the results. For *oneself*, engaging in moral philosophy can help to structure a life of integrity, by identifying what one can conscientiously live for, the normative ground where one finds one must finally stand after scrutinizing one's initial beliefs for hypocrisy, self-deception, parochialism, and prejudice. By philosophizing with others, one can hope for greater agreement, within limits; but, beyond that, when agreement proves impossible, one can only hope for *respectful* disagreement.

3. *Human Dignity and the Background in Earlier Moral Theories*

In his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Immanuel Kant famously argued that it is a fundamental moral principle, a Categorical Imperative, that we should treat humanity, in every person, as an end in itself, never as a means only. The idea had many implications, for example, regarding justice and the limits of expediency in politics; but one especially important implication concerned the basic attitude that human beings should take toward each other. In the second part of his later work, *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Kant spelled out this implication in discussions of “duties to oneself” and “duties to others.”⁴ Self-respect, he argued, requires that we avoid servility and other forms of self-degradation. The key idea was that, as a human being, everyone has an equal worth, independent of social standing and individual merits. To grovel and humiliate oneself before others, in shame or even guilt, is to deny one’s equal status as a human being. If guilty, one should reform, making one’s conduct more appropriate to the dignity of one’s status; but that status itself is unconditional, not something one earns or can forfeit.

Equally, Kant maintained, it is a duty to respect others as human beings. Contrary to aristocratic doctrine, he argued for a basic respect for persons as human beings that is not grounded in (and so should not vary with) heredity and social rank. Contrary to meritarian individualism, he claimed that this respect is also not based on (and so should not be extended or withheld according to) individual talents, accomplishments, earned social position, or even —surprisingly—moral goodness. The requirement of respect, instead, is rooted in the dignity of humanity, an unconditional and nonquantitative value attributed to everyone with the potential capacities to be a moral agent.⁵ This value, Kant main-

⁴ See *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 214–36 and 254–64.

⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 102. References and more interpretative com-

tained, is “above all price” and “without equivalent.” It sets firm limits to what one human being may do to another, even in a good cause. And, significantly, it is fundamentally a requirement of attitude and policy, not a specific act-principle.

Kant’s idea of human dignity was bound up with his particular conception of persons and embedded in a many-sided, systematic ethical theory that, you may be glad to hear, I shall not describe in detail. What I propose to do instead is to survey some background in the history of ethics that may help to explain the appeal of Kant’s basic idea.

Oversimplifying, we might characterize some major steps in previous moral philosophy as follows. From Plato and through many centuries, moral philosophers asked their audiences to pose *for themselves* the questions What is a good life? and What sort of life would a wise and reasonable person choose, given the human condition, the assets and limits of human capacities? The answers were partly given in terms of the kinds of ends the philosophers thought worth pursuing, but the ancient philosophers also acknowledged, in various ways, that the fact we live among other people imposes limits on what we can wisely and reasonably conceive to be the good life for ourselves. Justice, the bonds of friendship, and the needs of the *polis* were seen not merely as pragmatic, prudential constraints but also as limits inherent in the structure of a good life. The philosophers differed, of course, about what the good life is, and so certain higher-order philosophical questions became prominent: *Why* is one way of living better than another? What *reason* is there to prefer the life of an Athenian over the life of a Spartan, or vice versa? How can one know or justify one’s opinion that a life of so-called virtuous moderation is better than a life of pleasure? In other words, how are values grounded? What, if anything, makes them more than mere preferences?

ments on this basic idea of human dignity can be found in my *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant’s Moral Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), esp. chapters 2 and 10. See also Alan Donagan, *The Theory of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), and my “Donagan’s Kant,” *Ethics* 104 (1993) : 22–52.

Responding to early Sophists who regarded values as conventional and relative, Plato offered one of the main answers that has influenced the Western tradition: true values are grounded in an unchanging reality beyond this world we see and feel. Like numbers, and other abstractions, they exist independently of all human thought and history. They can be known through reason, but only through the trained and dialectically disciplined reason of experts, who, as it happens, are none other than philosophers. Although dialectical argument must precede the discovery of what is good, in the end, the good must be “seen” or intuited by the most highly educated. Common folk are only dimly aware of true values and so must be instructed by the experts. Ordinary feelings and thoughts about what is valuable are essentially worthless. The Platonic idea, however obscure, has persisted in modern and less elitist guises. Later versions concede that most human beings, with a bit of effort, can “see,” intuit, or have revealed to them the realm of independent values, which somehow exist “out there” as models, but are not made or changed by human needs, thought, or social development.

Later Greeks, including Aristotle, realized the implausibility of the Platonic vision, even if they were not as repelled as we are by the elitism that accompanied it. For them, starting with Aristotle, the biologist, the good life could be determined by the study of human nature. They saw nature as having a purpose or *telos* for our species, and this is supposed to be discernible in common human tendencies. The purpose of human life, and the virtues that enabled the wise and fortunate to achieve it, turned out to be remarkably reflective of the ideals and needs of the particular cultures in which these philosophies developed and competed: a balanced and moderate life of activity, guided by reflection, according to Aristotle; a life free from pain, according to Epicurus; and a life of disciplined self-mastery, according to the Stoics. The theories rested upon what now seem dubious assumptions about human nature: a *teleological* structure and *common* capacities, aims, and requirements for happiness.

Medieval thinkers introduced a theological perspective and eventually grafted this onto the ancient teleology. Ultimate values are grounded in the mind or will of God, they argued; voluntarists saying that God created values by his arbitrary will, and traditionalists saying (with Thomas Aquinas) that eternal values were not created by God but merely promulgated to us, finite beings, as divine commands.

All three views sought to ground values in something deeper, more lasting, and more impressive than fluctuating human desires and preferences. But modern thinkers, notably at first Thomas Hobbes, challenged their basic presuppositions. Abstractions do not exist as things to be perceived, he argued; and, famously, David Hume later added that even if they did, mere “perception” of them (by “reason”) would not move anyone to action. Human motivation, for good or ill, is rooted in desire and feeling, and so, Hume and his friends said, any plausible conception of objective value must be grounded in universal, or almost universal, human sentiments. According to the British empiricists, the good life is not grounded in anything outside of the lives of ordinary human beings, but rather in certain mundane commonalities in what we like and dislike. Platonic forms, ancient teleology, and even theology were increasingly rejected as ultimate grounds for value judgments; and, especially after Hume, it seemed more and more plausible to see values as little more than matters of taste and useful conventions. Privileged access to values by the elite became a less popular idea, for, though philosophers were supposed to have a more “scientific” understanding of values, the feelings that make up “the moral sense” (as well as other matters of taste) were thought to exist in everyone —everyone, at least, who grew up with the benefits of Western civilization.

The British empiricists helped to bring the idea of values down to earth, but their positive views raised problems. Would the empirical study of human nature really confirm the uniformity of human feelings on which their account of morality rested? Could

the fact that human beings happen to be disposed to similar feelings of approval and disapproval adequately account for the common belief in the authority, binding force, and universality of basic moral principles? Wouldn't conventional theories of justice, like Hume's, leave dominant societies without any good reason for respecting weaker societies?⁶

Natural law theory and social contract theory, in many varieties, also developed in the same modern period. Though almost always tied to theological premises, the former offered the hope that *reasonable* people, of all cultures, could survive and thrive together if they would just govern their interactions by a minimum common framework that respects the rights and value of all human beings.⁷ But the idea that natural laws are simply "discerned by reason" was too reminiscent of Plato. It invited philosophers to declare dogmatically which precepts were "laws of nature," thereby enabling them to dress up their favorite maxims in a cloak of authority. Increasingly one could wonder, how can one know what laws of conduct nature or God prescribes? How was the thought of such external laws supposed to *motivate* free and critical thinking persons, who have desires and plans of their own? When, as was common, natural law theory reverted to divine sanctions to provide motivation for obedience to its laws, it took on again many of the old problems of traditional theological ethics. For example, its appeal to divine sanctions left unexplained the common moral idea that one should do what is right without regard for reward or punishment.

⁶ Hume said, for example, that justice could not bind us with respect to animals, even highly intelligent animals, if they lacked the power to *make* us respect them, and tragically Europeans continued to treat less powerful cultures as if they were animals.

⁷ In theory natural rights and equal (basic) moral standing were typically extended to all human beings, "men," or "mankind," but in recent years many have raised reasonable doubts about the extent to which various natural law and social contract theorists actually intended to include women and "savages" when they wrote grandly of the rights of "man."

Social contract theories came in many varieties, and they offered some promise of grounding moral and political values more squarely in the problems and possibilities of the human condition. But various difficulties undermined the promise. Some theories, such as John Locke's, presupposed a historical fiction; others, such as Hobbes's, underestimated the human resources for peace and so proposed draconian means to end war. Jean-Jacques Rousseau deeply influenced Kant with his vision of what it would be for a community of free persons to live in mutual respect, listening to each other, working together, despite their differences, and governing themselves, in their public life, by the general will of all citizens. Though human-centered, egalitarian, and inspiring, Rousseau's political ideal nonetheless invited abuse of power by the self-appointed interpreters of the general will; it required invasive measures and a secular religion to promote patriotic spirit; and it gave little reason for decent treatment of "aliens," outside the ideal community.

This, briefly (and oversimply), was the context of moral philosophy as Kant might have seen it in 1785. Previous moral theories had failed. They preached specific values without adequate grounding, or else they undermined the authoritative mediating role of morality by reducing it to something contingent, relative, and in effect variable with culture. Crucially, Kant thought, they did not seek the source of all human values in humanity itself, that is, in the distinctively human capacities for thoughtful evaluation. Kant proposed a new perspective, which acknowledged contingent values that vary from person to person, and from society to society, and yet also endorsed a common formal framework for moral thinking. He tried to draw *both* of these, the variability of particular values and the common framework, from the idea that human beings themselves are the ultimate source of all our (human) values, moral, aesthetic, and personal. Endorsement under conditions of reasonable reflection, not mere sentiment, is what grounds values; and, significantly, the idea of *reasonable* reflection pre-

supposes a willingness to listen to the voice, and to heed the interests, of others. Reasonable reflection also requires a kind of deliberative freedom, which, in practice, implies that one must try to see one's situation realistically, counteracting one's natural tendencies to self-deceit, self-serving bias, and local prejudice. A central point was that, although the values of individuals and societies may vary widely, their expression must be constrained by whatever basic framework for human interactions would be accepted by reasonable, autonomous, and mutually respectful persons.

Kant's theory is complex, and, whatever its virtues, they are entangled in metaphysical and moral views that are at least controversial, at worst obscure and unduly rigoristic. I propose simply to set aside these features for now, in order to concentrate on the central idea of human dignity and respect for persons.

(1) For example, let us disregard Kant's conviction that reason prescribes quite specific absolute duties, such as that one ought never to tell a lie, and also set aside his empirically unfounded and obviously culture-bound ideas about the particular nature of women, sex, and animals.⁸

(2) Also, when Kant tried to *interpret* everyday moral concepts in a larger philosophical context, he introduced certain metaphysical Ideas that he thought presupposed in the moral perspective. These Ideas, including "the intelligible world" and a "free will" independent of space and time, have understandably led to skepticism about Kant's whole philosophical system. I believe, however, that these metaphysical extensions of Kant's normative concepts are to a considerable extent separable from the central points in his moral philosophy, at least separable from the main points that I shall stress in these lectures.

(3) Again, although Kant himself was optimistic that all reasonable and autonomous persons would agree to *the same* moral

⁸ See, for example, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 225–27, 220–22, and 238, and also "On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns," in the 3rd edition of *Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1993).

principles, that optimism is very difficult to share in our contemporary world. But, as I explain later, sharing that optimism is not necessary for our purposes; for we can treat Kant's proposals as a standard of *conscientiousness*, rather than absolute moral truth, and for this purpose assurance of universal agreement is not needed.⁹

(4) Similarly, though Kant may have assumed it, we need not insist that every sane adult member of *Homo sapiens* has a conscience and that all human children have the capacity and predisposition for it. Instead, one can say more modestly that, for practical purposes, our morality of respect presumes, until proved otherwise, that virtually all human beings, except perhaps the severely brain damaged, have enough potential for developing the capacities for reciprocity and self-restraint to qualify for human dignity. Again, unless proved otherwise, we presume that aware, functioning adults, who have a language and engage in social interactions, are not beyond the reach of reasonable moral discussion.

All of these modifications, I would argue, are compatible with the core idea of human dignity: that is, human beings are to be regarded as worthy of respect as human beings, regardless of how their values differ and whether or not we disapprove of what they do.

To avoid misunderstanding, I should anticipate now a point to be discussed more fully in the next lecture. That is, it is crucial to notice that in our ordinary ways of thinking we often use an idea of *respect* quite different from Kant's idea of respect for persons as *human beings*. This is the idea of respecting individuals *for special merit or achievements* that they may have to varying degrees. Respect for merit must be earned and can be forfeited. Kant's more controversial idea, by contrast, is that, simply by

⁹ I discuss this modification, or extension, of Kant's moral theory, and the need for it, along with some other needed developments, in "A Kantian Perspective on Moral Rules," *Philosophical Perspectives* 6 (1996): 285–304.

virtue of their humanity, all people qualify for a status of dignity, which should be recognized respectfully by everyone.¹⁰

4. *Persons Conceived as the Source of Values*

The idea of respecting persons remains rather empty until the underlying (normative) idea of persons is specified. *How* we respect persons as sources of value, as well as *why*, depends on how we suppose they come to value what they do.¹¹ This is not to say we need, or could use, a full-blown metaphysical theory or complete human psychology here. To base an ethics on either would introduce complexity and controversy of the very sort that simple respect principles are meant to bypass. What should suffice, for present purposes, is a review of some general points about how human beings come to form values — points that, on reflection, may be obvious but help to specify what it might mean to respect human beings as sources of value. I shall distinguish six points. The first few are Kant's; but the rest are necessary supplements.¹²

¹⁰ The basic distinction here and refinements have been frequently discussed. See, for example, Stephen L. Darwall, "Two Concepts of Respect," *Ethics* 88 (1977): 36–49, and my *Autonomy and Self-Respect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), chapters 1, 2, and 11.

¹¹ My main concern in this lecture is, not with the grounds, but with the *content*, or practical implications, of the Kantian idea that human beings should be respected as valuers, i.e., as rational persons whose valuing various sorts of things, under appropriate conditions, is the source of all values (at least as we can know them). The *grounds* of this basic Kantian notion that what is valuable is somehow constituted by the reflective endorsement, under certain conditions, of rational agents (conceived in a certain way) are, of course, open to controversy. Although in my second lecture I reconstruct some aspects of Kant's defense of this idea, there is much more that needs eventually to be said. In particular, I want to make clear that I do not endorse a simple argument pattern that says *without further argument and explanation*: persons should be respected as such; they are sources of value (i.e., their valuing things, in appropriate conditions, makes those things valuable); human persons, we discover empirically, value such-and-such things in these-and-those ways; therefore, persons should be respected, as valuers, by helping them continue to value things in these-and-those ways (as in fact they tend to do) and by providing them as far as possible with such-and-such (the things they in fact value). There is something to this line of thought, but, as it stands, there are too many gaps. My subsequent list of "ways human beings value" (in section 4), then, is meant only to point the way toward certain principles (in section 5) about how we should respect human beings, but it is not meant, by itself, to establish or justify these principles.

¹² Here I sketch these points about values only briefly. Each needs further explanation, and the relations among them should be clarified. All but the first two

(1) Most obviously, individuals value the realization of various personal goals and projects and, derivatively, many other things as means to this. Traditionally, human beings, as opposed to inanimate things, plants, and animals, are conceived as having characteristic capacities of understanding, memory, foresight, use of language, rational reflection, and awareness of others.¹³ They have, at least potentially, an ability to constrain themselves by principles and norms seen as providing reasons for acting. They have some capacity to reflect on their immediate desires, impulses, and preferences and from this to form more settled goals, plans, and policies, while aware of elementary facts of life, such as that desires conflict and one “cannot have it all.” They adopt ends, recognize means, and are disposed to take the necessary means to their ends, when available. These points correspond in Kant’s theory to the ability to “set oneself ends,” to use hypothetical imperatives, and to make plans free from immediate control by animal instinct and impulse.¹⁴ Having these general capacities implies little or nothing about the specific values that human beings have. It does not imply, for example, that they are selfish; nor does it imply that they are altruistic.

(2) The capacities of “humanity” that qualify persons as “ends in themselves” include some minimum capacity for reci-

points, in effect, propose incorporating into Kantian moral theory ideas that are usually thought to be reserved for theories hostile to Kantianism. These ideas are admittedly important and yet either omitted or not stressed in Kant’s writings and in Kantian ethics as usually interpreted. To develop these ideas and to show their compatibility, even fruitful companionship, with what I consider the most important, basic features of Kant’s moral theory is a large project, to which I hope to contribute in future work.

¹³ I say “characteristic” here to avoid controversies about how to classify infants, severely brain damaged (human) accident victims, etc., issues to be considered, at least briefly, in my second lecture.

¹⁴ Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 80–88. Later Kant calls these capacities “the predisposition to humanity,” as opposed to the (moral) “predisposition to personality.” See *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), 21–23.

procuity and recognition of the moral standing of others.¹⁵ This is not to say that everyone is morally good or even has a developed conscience. The point is just that basic respect is attributed on the presumption (even if just faith) that the persons respected have at least the capacity to be touched and moved by considerations of reciprocity and recognition of (all) other persons as having moral standing.¹⁶

On the Kantian view, we conceive of persons as (at least potential) *valuers*, whom we respect as the *source of all (human) values*. But persons are valuers in different ways or senses. Under point (1) above, we consider them as *valuing* goals, policies, and derivatively means, where *valuing* involves some degree of reflective endorsement, which is more than merely *desiring*. Under point (2) above, we consider persons as at least potentially recognizing the (equal) status of all persons and then as valuing being in reciprocal relations with others on mutually agreeable terms.”

¹⁵ This feature of what, in his *Groundwork*, Kant calls “humanity” corresponds to what, in *Religion*, he calls the “disposition to personality” (222–23). Kant regarded *humanity* (and later *personality*) as more than a latent capacity, like the ability to learn French or set theory. This included a predisposition toward developing and exercising the capacity, a predisposition that sometimes fails to develop fully, but, absent conflicting tendencies (e.g., sensuous desires), it would. Kant regarded these dispositions to be innate, not learned, aspects of human nature, but contemporary Kantian theory, I think, might concede that it is sufficient that the capacity to *acquire* (or “learn”) the predisposition is a natural or an almost invariable feature of human beings. Such a concession would not be without consequences, but I shall not pursue the issue further here.

¹⁶ I am inclined to add “equal moral standing,” but Kantians should want the threshold for respect kept low enough to include, for practical purposes, virtually every functioning adult human being. Perhaps capacity to recognize equality is not so essential here as the capacity to recognize everyone as having *at least a quite substantial moral standing* (“substantial” here implying much more than a minimum recognition of someone’s “moral standing,” say, as “lowest caste human”). For now I leave open just what is involved in “recognizing moral standing” and “reciprocity.” Eventually, of course, these need to be spelled out, but for now the main point is just that human beings are presumed to be, in some appropriate sense, able and disposed to acknowledge and respect rights and interests of others and to join others in accepting (and following) various mutually advantageous principles and conforming to them.

¹⁷ This corresponds, roughly, to “a capacity for a sense of justice” and to the capacity for being “reasonable,” in John Rawls’s *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 81ff.

But there are still other ways in which persons may be considered sources of value.

(3) People have not merely ends and means according to their likes and dislikes, they also tend to have some values that are essential or virtually indispensable to them. I have in mind two quite different sorts of things. First, there are some general aims, characteristic of human beings, apparently so common, so deeply rooted, and so vital to decent human life everywhere that they are understandably taken, for practical purposes, as *essential* to human nature. Happiness, broadly construed, is perhaps the most common term for these aims, when appropriately combined, but more specific elements often cited include self-preservation, freedom from pain, the development and exercise of our physical and mental powers, companionship, social standing, self-respect, and so on. Less controversial are associated needs that (virtually) everyone seems to recognize as vital to human life, whatever its particular forms: for example, food, water, shelter, community support, and freedom and opportunities of various kinds. Second, there are the various particular projects, associations, and cherished ideals with which individuals come to identify themselves. Among these are the “ground projects” that Bernard Williams talks about, commitments so deep that the person who has them might not care to live without them and such that we might say that the person would not be “the same person” if he or she lost them.¹⁸ Kant himself acknowledged indispensable values of the first kind but not, at least explicitly, those of the second kind.¹⁹ Nevertheless, that people often have such individual ground projects and ideals is an important fact about them as persons, a fact that needs to be recog-

¹⁸ Bernard Williams, “Persons, Character, and Morality,” in Bernard Williams, *Moral Luck* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1–19.

¹⁹ See Kant’s *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 189–92, and his *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1987), 317–21. The significance for Kantian ethics becomes clear in Jeffrie G. Murphy, *Kant: The Philosophy of Right* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1970), 94–108, and Barbara Herman, *The Practice of Moral Judgment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), chapter 3, 45–72.

nized in any full account of what it is to respect persons as persons²⁰

(4) Human beings do not form values as abstract, ahistorical rational beings completely free from cultural context, but neither are they fully programmed robots lacking in the critical ability to contribute to the shape of their lives. As many have recently emphasized, people come to value what they do in a particular setting, influenced by dominant cultural patterns as well as cross-currents of contrary social influences.²¹ We are embedded in intertwining networks of cultures and subcultures; and however independent and thoughtful we may become, these no doubt constantly influence and impose outer limits on what we come to like and to dislike, to cherish and to hate. However, for practical purposes, the Kantian warns that we should not overestimate the irresistibility of these cultural bonds by assuming that reflective persons can never see good reason to set aside a part of their heritage. As existentialists saw (but exaggerated), we are not like *personae* in a play of life for which the script has already been completely written. We stand neither totally outside, nor totally within, the roles in which we find ourselves. Up to a point, at least when the cross-currents of the context permit, people can take responsibility, and hold others responsible, for trying to resist and remold features of a culture deeply at odds with respect for humanity.

(5) Human beings are disposed to seek what is valuable to them, and sometimes they find it—often where they were not looking.²² Too often Kantians, like existentialists, talk as if “free”

²⁰ I thank Cynthia Stark and Robin Dillion for helping me to appreciate this point.

²¹ Alasdair MacIntyre is perhaps the philosopher who has, in recent times, most vividly and influentially emphasized the importance of this point. See, for example, his *After Virtue*, 2nd edition (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

²² Here, as in (1) and (3), and to some extent in (4), I am thinking of “values” as the various things people cherish other than morality itself (e.g., the minimum framework of respect I have alluded to). For example, art, customs, rituals, religious traditions, family relations, work, games, foods, literature, myths, patterns of humor, etc., of various kinds, the sort of things, aside from morality, that characteristically differentiate one culture from another.

individuals “choose” their nonmoral values, picking them from thin air, as it were, for no reason. They suggest, misleadingly, that (acausally) free agents simply “dub” certain goals as valuable to them, by sheer radical choice, thereby *making* them rationally important to themselves and morally significant to others.²³ In fact, I think, for the most part we simply *find* certain things in our experience to be valuable to ourselves and others like us, and other things we find indifferent, ugly, deplorable, despicable, or disgusting. Like what is “funny,” “interesting,” and “entertaining,” what is seen as intersubjectively “valuable” in this way is judged to be, as we say, “worthy” of attention among some relevant group, but this carries no implication that “value” is a real intrinsic property of things in the world or even the dispositional property of causing pleasure to everyone who experiences the thing. To say that we *find* things valuable even when we were not especially looking for value (e.g., suddenly coming upon a gorgeous sunset) is not to make a metaphysical point but only a phenomenological one.²⁴

²³ Some of my earlier papers (e.g., “Pains and Projects,” in *Autonomy and Self-Respect*, chapter 12, and “Kant’s Theory of Practical Reason,” in *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant’s Moral Theory*, chapter 7) may veer close to these implausible claims. Christine Korsgaard too at times seems to suggest something of the same sort, but I suspect she intends something more subtle.

²⁴ I mean here to make clear that, despite my talk of “finding” values, the point does not imply commitment to G. E. Moore’s theory of intrinsic value or to any “naturalistic” reduction of “value” to “fact.” I also want to leave open the plausible *psychological* explanation of judgments of value as rooted in natural responses of persons of a certain kind, developed in a certain way, to facts they encounter or at least perceptions they have. Thus, the causal account of value judgments may refer to a relation between persons, as responders, and facts or perceptions about the valued objects. But this is not to say that to *experience something as good* is to *think of it as* causing favorable responses in me and persons like me. I assume here too, as earlier, that to value something, to find it valuable, and to judge it of (intersubjective) value are more than merely desiring, liking, or experiencing some inclination toward the thing. In the first case one finds, or judges, or sees something as *worthy* of desiring and endorsing for choice, at least in appropriate contexts. More needs to be said on these distinctions, of course. Finally, I conjecture that these commonsense points about how we find various things valuable, and disvaluable, are denied by philosophical extremists regarding value—both voluntarists and realists—because they overreact to the inadequacies of the opposite extreme view. Once we concede that values are neither “created” as such by free, unmotivated “dubbing” nor discovered as intrinsic features of the world we experience, then there should be little resistance to the commonplace observation that we typically “find” some things valuable and others not.

It is *as if* we *just see* that some things are good to us and, we assume, to others like us, and other things bad; these “discoveries” come and go, whether we are looking or not, often not all at once, but gradually.

I should emphasize that none of this implies that the same things will be, or even can be, found valuable in every culture; to the contrary, I assume that we cannot even understand, much less appreciate, some experiences without the cultural background of those to whom it is valuable.

(6) Finally, human beings value much, if not most, of what they do *as social beings*. Kant, too much influenced by Hobbes, tended to think of the moral life as a constant struggle between reasonable moral constraints and *self-serving* individual desires. But it is part of our problem, as well as its solution, that as social beings we care deeply for joint projects, interlocking social networks, and common histories. It is a misleading but all too familiar Enlightenment picture that independent individuals are always beset by discrete self-referring desires and then from these choose for themselves a series of personal “ends” that are definable without mention of others, except perhaps as competitors. But this picture of what and how people value what they do is seriously distorted in several ways.

Consider, for example, the fact that many of our projects are *joint projects*. That is, like members of an orchestra we aim to produce something, over time, that cannot be done alone. More significantly, the goal itself is conceived as doing something well *with others*, where each does his or her part not in isolation but with the aim and wish to do it with the others.²⁵

Moreover, *historical particulars* are typically important in what we value. We do not, for example, want just that some good

²⁵ The general point is recognized by many people, but I am indebted especially to the following: Robert M. Adams, “Common Projects and Moral Virtue,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 13 (1988): 297–307, Nancy Sherman, “The Virtues of Common Pursuits,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 53, no. 2 (1993): 277–99, and various works of Michael Bratman.

music be played by someone, but that we, the orchestra members (Ursula, Kareem, Hsu, Dmitri, Joe, et al.), play Beethoven's Seventh Symphony well together now. Feuding families want not just to confirm the abstract proposition "Unprovoked aggressors will be made to suffer"; they want to make sure that they themselves avenge the aggression of their particular enemies immediately.

Some of our deepest values may also be *reciprocal and layered*.²⁶ For example, I may value the fact that you respect and trust me, and you value the fact that I respect and trust you; moreover, I value the fact that you value the fact that I respect and trust you, and you value the fact that I value the fact that I respect and trust you, and so on. The values here are obviously deeply entwined and not individually satisfiable.

Again, philosophers often oversimplify life by treating all values as present-time desires for goals, which are seen as discrete states of affairs or events, but many of our values, I think, are *cross-time wholes*, involving our joint histories with other people.²⁷ Producing a piece of music, with a temporal beginning, middle stages, and a conclusion, is an example. As Aristotle suggests, we can assess a human life as exemplifying the final good for human beings, and as a "happy" life, only by considering the whole life as it has been (or is anticipated to be) completed.²⁸ Moreover, what counts, as we reflect, is not just whether the discrete moments were (or will be) pleasant (or intrinsically desirable) but also the pattern and the conclusion, how the parts of the life fit together, how each stage complements or completes the earlier stages, for good or ill. A meaningful life is not measured, on the model of account-

²⁶ This idea is vividly presented by Thomas Nagel in his essay "Sexual Perversion," *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 5–17.

²⁷ This is a major theme of MacIntyre's *After Virtue*. I note its potential relevance to a practical problem in "The Message of Affirmative Action," in *Autonomy and Self-Respect*, chapter 13, especially 201–11.

²⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House), Book I, chapters 10–11 [para. 1100a–1102a], 946–49.

ing, in terms of pluses and minuses for independently good or bad moments; but rather, as Alasdair MacIntyre has stressed, its value is often assessed more in the *narrative terms* of stories (e.g., histories, biographies, novels, legends, and folktales). Here the connections between the parts of a life matter, like the connections among the chapters of a book. The terms of assessment, not reducible to any fixed rules, include initiation, unfolding, tensions, disruptions, growth, character, climax, resolution, and fitting (or unfitting) endings.

We can observe, too, that the whole of a life, a personal history with loved ones, and significant episodes within these often have for us an *organic value*, that is, a value in the whole that cannot be equated to any sum of values of “parts.”²⁹ Like the beauty of a painting or the personal “meaning” of complex social experience, such things cannot be evaluated by dividing them, assessing the parts, and somehow “adding up” the results. The great moral philosophers, including Kant, must have had some practical awareness of these rather obvious facts; but, as contemporary critics are fond of repeating, their value theories are often expressed in special, semitechnical terminologies that oversimplify the familiar experiences of evaluation that they were meant to clarify.

A final caution. These various complex ways in which social beings have values should not be confused with the simple idea that people (at times) care for the welfare of others. That, I think, is obviously true, but such simple benevolent desires are far from the whole story of our being social. We also hate, resent, and

²⁹ G. E. Moore emphasized the idea that intrinsic values have an organic unity, the sum of the value of the whole not always being equal to the sum of the intrinsic value of its parts. However, Moore worked with a metaphysical idea of intrinsic goodness as an intuited, simple, nonnatural property, which is opposed to the Kantian conception, and Moore was also more willing than one should be, I believe, to talk as if intrinsic values could be compared in terms of the *quantity* of value in each, thereby taking too literally the metaphors of “sums” of value. See G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903, reprinted 1959), 27–36.

despise others; we find our lives deeply attached and entwined with others we do not even like; many joint projects of one group are aimed at the destruction of another group; and many prefer narratives and histories that end with one's group gleefully gloating at the suffering of some group of outsiders. Human sociability, and the sense of connectedness with others, is part of the context of human life, for good or ill; it is not, by itself, the solution to its conflicts.

5. *What Would It Be to Respect Persons as Valuers?*

To review, on the Kantian perspective, the ultimate source of human values is not Platonic forms, natural teleology, divine will, or universal human sentiment. Ultimately all that is valuable for us stems somehow from the reflective endorsements of human beings. *Particular* ends, means, ground projects, discovered delights, joint endeavors, social networks, and histories are valued differently by different individuals and cultures. But the common framework Kant proposes as worthy of reflective endorsement by all is a basic requirement, across cultures and individual differences, to respect every human being as a source of value.

How can we make this more specific? The key is that persons are to be respected as the sources of (human) value and that we value things in the six ways reviewed in the last section. More specifically, then, how should we respect every person?

(1) Insofar as we value and respect persons as capable of reflecting on their desires, setting their own ends, and rationally pursuing means to them, we have some (presumptive) reason to allow them the space and opportunity to do so and even to aid them in the pursuit to some extent, provided their means and ends are compatible with due respect for all others. Since there are millions of people on earth, each with many diverse ends and entitled to some life of his or her own, the general duty *to aid* their pursuits, as Kant said, can only be an "imperfect" one: a relevant consideration but indefinite as to whom, when, where, and exactly how to

help. The presumption against interference with others' innocent projects, however, stands as a constant constraint on our pursuit of our own interest as well as a permanent bar against excessive paternalism—the attempt to make people happy only by *our* vision of the good rather than theirs.

(2) Insofar as we value and respect persons as moral agents, with the capacity to reciprocate and acknowledge the moral standing of others, we must not “write them off” as creatures who can only understand and respond to power, bribery, and manipulation. Morality itself is constituted, on the Kantian view, by what fully reflective, autonomous, and reasonable persons would agree to as a fair and mutually agreeable framework for human interactions. Hence no one has privileged access to what morality prescribes, and no one's voice on moral matters should be arbitrarily discounted. What mutual respect requires more specifically must itself be worked out, in many-sided conversations, in which the biases of each of us are amply exposed to the contrary perspectives of others. The (modified) Kantian conception of morality does not entail that to be respectful one must indiscriminately celebrate, accept, or even tolerate all the different practices endorsed by some cultural group. Given cultural diversity, the lesson to draw, rather, is that we cannot have proper respect and work out what this requires in particular contexts unless we try to think from an inclusive human perspective, with moral humility, willingness to listen, to rethink, at times to suspend judgment, and often to compromise.

(3) Insofar as we value and respect persons as having the two kinds of indispensable values, (a) the necessary means of life and (b) self-identifying ground projects, we have presumptive reasons both for noninterference and for aid, provided the projects and the means themselves are compatible with due respect for others. Importantly, we have here grounds for setting limits to our tolerance and approval of what others do; for when the powerful are denying the weak the basic necessities of life, to stand up for the weak is often more respectful to all than standing idly by.

Respect for persons as deeply identified with certain (permissible) ground projects requires respect for them as the particular individuals they are, not merely as fellow members of common humanity. That is, what is called for is not merely respect for the general capacities and rights they share with others but also appropriate attention and response to what they, as individuals, count as most significant about “who they are.”³⁰ Respecting humanity, then, requires more than a proper attitude toward people in the abstract; it requires respect for people as particular individuals, whose “identity” (as we say) is bound up with particular projects, personal attachments, and traditions.³¹

(4) Insofar as we respect persons as embedded in a cultural and historical context, though capable to some extent of reflectively criticizing and rejecting it, we must avoid two extremes. On the one hand, we must not discount the significance of culture in determining what treatment is properly respectful; but, on the other hand, we must not simply assume that to treat them *as their dominant culture dictates* is always respectful to *them*, the individuals. Understanding the individuals’ own conception of their relation to their culture is important, but not always decisive. For example, to condemn someone for what we regard as immoral conduct, in total disregard of what that conduct meant and whether it was prescribed or condoned in the agents’ own culture, would fail to respect them as human beings, like us, who are partially shaped, unconsciously limited, and deeply influenced by cultural environment. But to refuse to make any judgment at all about those in “other cultures” is disrespectful to them, for it treats them

³⁰ *Appropriate* respect here does not mean indiscriminate aid or toleration of all personal projects; it must take into account the fact that some personal projects, even “ground projects” crucial to an individual’s “identity,” may be deeply immoral and contemptuous of others.

³¹ The notion of “identity” here is normative and slippery, though important. It is not the same as the more minimal “personal identity” generally discussed in the metaphysical debates of philosophers concerning split brains, brain transplants, memory discontinuity, etc.

as the fixed product of societal influences with no moral power to understand and be moved by moral criticism of it.

(5) Insofar as we respect persons as generally “seekers” and sometimes “finders” of value, we should be ready to make some effort to appreciate the different values others have found. At the same time we should not assume that they are perfectly set and satisfied with what they have found, and so uninterested in communicating and sharing new experiences. Ideally, value systems of individuals and groups would evolve, as people have the power and freedom to explore, and to widen the range of their experience, as well as to retreat and protect themselves from constant massive exposure to unwelcome forms of life. Diversity would not be valued just for the sake of diversity, but for the way it allows some to live out the best values they have found and enables others to seek out something better.

(6) Finally, insofar as we take seriously the idea that persons have social values (joint projects, reciprocal and layered values, etc.), we can no longer imagine that we can respect persons just by dealing with them, one by one, as if isolated sources of individual interests. We respect someone only by acknowledging and taking fully into account the importance to that person, and others, of the networks of relationships in which that person finds life meaningful. Group ties, traditions, family connections, and deeply layered hopes may mean more to persons than anything they value just for themselves. Respect for individuals, properly understood, should not compete with community values, for the only way to respect the social values of individuals is to honor, so far as one legitimately can, the groups within which the individual finds his or her life valuable. The limits to how far we can honor group ties, of course, lie in the general requirement to respect all persons. Insofar as group loyalty feeds on hatred and contempt of others and expresses itself through war and humiliation, then those who would respect all humanity must disengage their basic *respect for*

the individual members from the respect for their group that otherwise would be its corollary.

6. *Basic Respect and Multiculturalism in the University*

So far my remarks have been quite abstract, wide-ranging, perhaps too concerned with theory for the general reader. Thus, in conclusion, let me try to compensate in a small way by talking more specifically about how the idea of basic respect for persons might apply to the controversial question, How should universities respond to the facts of cultural diversity?

The issue is complicated because of the diverse nature of universities themselves. They are many-sided institutions that have evolved for various purposes, serve different constituencies, and are answerable to many contributing and engaged parties. What these elements should be, and how they should be ranked, will no doubt always be a matter of controversy. To simplify, then, I shall comment only on the educational or teaching commitment of universities, particularly in undergraduate general studies courses.

The question, then, is this: What is a reasonable and respectful attitude to take, when confronting decisions about university general education, given heightened sensitivity to (what I shall call) the facts of cultural diversity? First, let us review some of these facts. I take it that the following four points are fairly uncontroversial.³²

(1) People in different cultures, both across time and now, deeply differ in their ways of life, their social norms, their conceptions of law and interpersonal relationships, their highest aspirations, and also in their mundane everyday tastes and preferences. There may be also overlapping similarities, perhaps even some universal convergence points; but because of difficulties of cross-

³²The "facts" that I select to emphasize here are, admittedly, far from all the relevant facts that need, ultimately, to be taken into account. I deliberately stress what I take to be facts about deep differences, difficulties in cross-cultural communication, and oppression of the weak by the strong because these are, I believe, major sources of the most urgent obstacles to mutual respect in multicultural contexts.

cultural understanding, we do not know how deep and pervasive these similarities, or the differences, are.

(2) Although cultures evolve and intermingle, and individuals sometimes rebel and advocate radical changes, most people tend to seek and find what is valuable and meaningful to them within their own cultural settings. Individuals are embedded in cultures and often identify themselves and their ground projects in terms intelligible only in the cultural contexts.

(3) Although, when conditions are right, social criticism and independence of mind are possible and important, we all inevitably tend to misinterpret others and to be biased by our own heritage whenever we try to think through issues that cross cultural borders. This includes, of course, philosophers who lecture on respect and cultural diversity.

(4) All the various cultures, and subcultures, are not equal in power, and throughout history powerful groups have tended to persecute, exploit, and try to dominate weaker groups, sometimes with open group enmity but often in the name of universal ideals. The means have been many, including not only war, slavery, and genocide but also subtler symbols of moralistic disapproval or contemptuous dismissal. These are reflected in folklore, histories, literature, and philosophy, as well as in everyday jokes and conversations. The almost universal tendency to bias and the frequent moral imperialism of dominant groups understandably lead to skepticism about the objectivity of cross-cultural judgments, especially the judgments of the relatively privileged.

Some apparently think that these “facts” warrant an attitude of extreme relativism about values, which draws no limits. Since there are such deep differences in beliefs, they say, there is no good reason not to accept “respectfully” whatever values prevail within a culture. Or, if they confess disgust for foot-binding, clitorectomies, wife burning, child prostitution, or other practices condoned in different cultures, they must be careful, they think, to explain that this is a mere “personal preference.” Since whatever passes

within a culture is to be respected for that place and time, extreme relativists have no moral ground, besides changing local fashion, for trying to reform even their own society. “Whatever is, is right”; or, to put the point in more postmodern terms, the ideas of “right” and “wrong,” and “better” and “worse,” need to be deconstructed and then discarded with other myths of the past.

As elementary philosophy texts have explained time and time again, admitting the facts of cultural diversity in no way supports this whole-scale resistance to making cross-cultural value judgments with its indiscriminate acceptance of whatever has the endorsement of some culture. Moreover, the rejection of all cross-cultural standards opens the door to the very sort of power-driven cultural imperialism that culturally sensitive, gentle relativists want to resist. Controlling and subordinating those who are weaker may be an essential value in some dominant cultures, as, for example, in the American subculture of *macho* men with respect to “their” women. When this happens, indiscriminate toleration amounts to politely condoning abuse, exploitation, and humiliation. Even the *hypocrisy* of oppressors who dominate others in the name of high moral ideals cannot be condemned by the extreme relativist, except perhaps with the mild rebuke, “My friends and I dislike what you are doing.”

We should not be smug, though, just because we can see the self-defeating character of the extreme relativist position. The facts of cultural diversity do not support *that*, but we should not be so arrogant as to think that they have no implications for us at all. In particular, for those who, like me, endorse at least basic respect for persons, there are strong implications. Among these, I believe, are the following.

First, we cannot fully respect people of diverse cultural backgrounds, within our own country or elsewhere, without making serious effort to understand and *appreciate*, so far as we can, features of their cultures that they cherish and see as crucial to their

particular identity. Given the inevitable predisposition to cultural bias, we can progress toward such understanding and appreciation only by engaging with the voices of the people within those cultures, through their literature, their histories, and their folklore, and ideally with the help of teachers who themselves represent the cultural heritage.

Of course, limited time, opportunity, and other circumstances severely limit the extent and depth to which any one person can study and engage with other cultures. As teachers and students, perhaps, we have more contact with other ethnic groups than the average person does; but the more diverse our local environment, the more obvious it becomes that we can begin to understand only a small fraction of the many traditions represented by the people we meet. To study a wide range of cultures superficially, like sampling many dishes at a smorgasbord, may be personally rewarding, but is unlikely to contribute significantly to overcoming the problems of cross-cultural misunderstanding and disrespect.

A more realistic ideal would be deeper engagement with one or a few different cultures. Becoming fully “bicultural” in one’s experience, analogous to being truly bilingual in speech, is probably beyond the reach of most of us, nor is it clear that this is generally desirable. What is important, however, is to challenge one’s customary ways of thinking, feeling, and perceiving so that one becomes more open to the possibility of values that we could never imagine when bound within a single cultural experience. This increased sensitivity to alternatives may lead to new sources of personal enrichment, in music, art, literature, and personal friendship; but, more important, it is needed for *meaningful* tolerance and respect. Without the openness stimulated by appreciation of some other cultures, we might proclaim commitment to these ideals but fail to see *when and how they give us reasons* for acting (and for restraint) in contexts of cultural conflict. Respect is blind if uninformed about relevant values and the reasons they provide; and it

inevitably remains uninformed if nothing shakes us from our habits of seeing everything exclusively from our primary culture's perspective.³³

Second, in trying to understand and appreciate different literary values, traditions, rituals, music, languages, patterns of personal relation, and so forth, respect calls for us *to confront our biases*, to try to recognize and counteract our initial inclination always to judge by comparison with what is most familiar. With regard to diverse *moral practices*, all the more, basic respect calls for modesty and caution to curb our arrogant bias in judging others whom we hardly understand. This requires not merely self-discipline but also, so far as possible, respectful confrontation and communication with representatives of cultures whose practices we are initially inclined to condemn; for, on the modified Kantian view proposed here, moral insight is not the special endowment of any group but is something that can only emerge gradually as diverse but mutually respectful human beings engage seriously in communication about how best to live together despite their differences. Thus, openness in confronting other cultures is needed, not only to respect individuals who are different from us, but also, more generally, to curb our moral arrogance and to further moral understanding. This is not to say that morality is simply a hodgepodge of standards picked indiscriminately from a variety of cultures and thrown into a multicultural pot. The point is rather that no single group, within the bounds of one heritage, can by itself achieve that diminution of bias, awareness of options, and appreciation of human limits and possibilities necessary to warrant confidence that it possesses the best, or most human and just, moral system.

Third, it is not respectful to people of other cultures, or to ourselves, to condone and tolerate all cultural practices, no matter

³³ Barbara Herman has been particularly helpful in stressing that what is needed (and possible) is not so much full knowledge of every culture but rather *openness* and sensitivity to possible facets of the cultures we confront that may affect what reasons we have to act one way or another.

how harmful and restrictive they may be. On the modified Kantian conception that I am proposing, human beings are seen as culturally embedded but nonetheless as (to some degree) capable of critical judgment, independent thinking, recognition of the moral status of other persons, and constraining themselves by principles based on the ideal of mutual respect among all persons. To respect this moral capacity, as the key to a morality of respect, we must, however modestly and cautiously, condemn practices that, even after closest study, seem obviously and deeply dismissive of certain classes of human beings. To condemn cultural practices, elsewhere or at home, one must take a stand, and in taking a stand one takes a *risk* that bias has corrupted one's judgment. But respect for all, unlike more parochial principles, can be conscientiously defended to all, and those who endorse it show no respect to themselves or others when, through excess caution, they refuse to condemn what they see as deeply contemptuous practices. An important implication for issues regarding curriculum is that the respect that calls for widening cultural understanding does not require, or allow, us to suspend our most basic standards of judgment — for example, to read the diaries of Anne Frank and Joseph Goebbels, or the autobiography of Frederick Douglass and the speeches of John C. Calhoun, with the same morally detached interest that might be appropriate in the study of set theory, abstract art, and geology.

Fourth, to say that moral judgment should not be suspended when reading, discussing, or selecting curricular materials does not imply that moralistic criteria should dictate what is to be read. To purge the reading lists of everything considered immoral, replacing these with works more uplifting or “politically correct,” would be to undermine any hope of the sort of cross-cultural understanding to which universal respect aspires. Listening appreciatively to history's victims is no doubt long overdue, but we should also hear the false rhetoric of oppressors and the banal excuses of the overly tolerant, if we hope to gain more than a skewed and superficial grasp of the complex dynamics of cultures. Curriculum develop-

ment requires judicious selection, but understanding and respect require listening to many voices we dislike and deplore — not listening passively merely, but with minds and hearts fully engaged.

Fifth, how far should a curriculum go in replacing the old, Western, white male authors, such as Shakespeare, Hobbes, Gibbon, and Darwin, with writers representing other perspectives (e.g., contemporary, non-Western, non-European, and feminist)? I do not pretend to have a definite answer; and, even if I did, the appropriate forum to which it should be presented, with due respect, would not be the audience at a public lecture but a diverse deliberative committee with the authority and commitment to work out the details together. One implication of what I have been saying today, however, seems clear and relevant. As human beings, we tend not only to hold on to what we now value but also to seek out more of what we may find valuable, and we find it in many places we could not initially anticipate. But finding something valuable is not the same as having an initial untutored desire for it or even liking it upon first exposure. Many, if not most, of the long revered works in the now much disparaged “canon” for college students were there because people who devoted time to them experienced in them something that enriched their lives. These works have, then, a strong, though not exclusive, claim on our attention. The claim stems not so much from our respect for the authors themselves, much less from their origin in a European, white male tradition, but from respect for those who might be the readers. One does not have to argue that these works are “better” than each competing nonstandard selection, by some standard neutral among all cultures, but only that they have been persistently found to be among the best or most valuable to the reflective readers within the tradition they represent. Nor, for reasons just given, need they be “morally pure.” What does matter is that they have been challenging, stimulating, illuminating, and life-enriching to a sufficient number of intelligent and diligent readers to warrant a prediction that they will continue to be found so by others.

My remarks here are not meant to favor “the canon” more than innovation and diversity in the curriculum, for the case for each seems strong. Here, as elsewhere, dogmatism is out of place. There are no precise lines to be drawn in choosing among a wealth of riches. So what proper respect calls for, surely, is open discussion and listening, broadly inclusive procedures for decision making, and eventually compromise. If a curriculum did not give substantial place for *establishing excellence* within the dominant Western tradition, it would not respect those who are deeply influenced by that tradition and so have special reason to try to understand it and find what has been thought most valuable in it. If, however, a traditional curriculum did not diversify in a serious and substantial way, it would continue to reinforce cultural bias or at least fail to help students to develop their resources to fight it. Moreover, this extreme conservatism would fail to respect students as persons who, despite being embedded in a culture, can enrich their lives by learning to appreciate values of another kind —or at least to respect those who do.

II. MUST RESPECT BE EARNED?

In my last lecture I sketched (and modified) an old idea drawn from Immanuel Kant, the idea that the ultimate source of human values is humanity itself, rather than Platonic forms, natural teleology, God’s commands, universal human sentiments, or particular social conventions. Humanity is attributed only to those presumed to have certain basic normative capacities and dispositions. These include the ability to reflect on one’s desires and circumstances, to set ends for oneself, to form coherent plans, and to be willing to reciprocate with others in endorsing principles that respect each person as a potential source of legitimate values. In Kant’s philosophy these ideas were accompanied by a moral rigorism and a radical “two perspective” metaphysics that few philosophers today can accept; but I treat these as associated ideas

that are inessential to Kant's central moral insights. In his vigorous defense of individual responsibility, Kant seems to have exaggerated the power of autonomous individuals to set themselves ends and to adopt principles independently of others, but his view can be coherently supplemented, I suggested, with a more realistic account of how, rather than dubbing individual goals to be valuable by acts of free choice, we tend to *find* our values, as social beings, within our familiar cultural contexts. Applying this suggestion, I argued that *if* we respect persons as sources of value, understood in this more realistic way, *then* we are committed to certain attitudes about cultural diversity. In particular, this respect has implications for *how* different cultures should be represented in a university curriculum. For example, proper respect calls for caution and modesty in moral judgment but not for unlimited tolerance or passive acceptance. It requires effort to appreciate other cultures but not moralistic dismissal of our Western heritage. Mutual respect, in a pluralistic world, urges us to acknowledge that we are all embedded in cultural contexts that unavoidably *limit* our understanding, skew our judgment, but do *not preclude* our responsibility to confront and diminish our prejudices in wider cross-cultural communication.

Supplementing Kant's own account of how we form our values, I called attention to six points about how a commitment to basic respect for human beings as sources of value might work out in practice. Each of these prescriptions should be considered, for now, as *prima facie* or *defeasible*, for in particular cases what is recommended by one consideration may be in tension with what is recommended by another. For example, the presumption that one should not tolerate or condone culture practices that are deeply contemptuous of women can be in tension with the *prima facie* consideration that we should respectfully acknowledge that individuals tend to identify themselves by their traditional roles within a culture. How in practice these tensions should be resolved will require further reflection, perhaps case by case. Inventing

further rules for these problems may not be helpful. In any case, my argument left the details of these matters open, in order to stress more general points. That is, *if* we accept basic Kantian respect, *then* (1) there are limits to what cultural practices we can condone, but (2) we have at least *prima facie* reason not to interfere coercively or manipulatively with the cultural values that others find, and reflectively endorse, as central to “who they are,” and (3) we must try, so far as possible, to encourage changes in disrespectful cultural practices, at home or elsewhere, but only by means that respectfully address, as moral agents, those with whom we disagree.

Although these conclusions may seem obvious to many, they are not uncontroversial. Even if our values stem ultimately from the reflective endorsements of human beings, we may wonder, *why* should we respect and value every person as a source of values? It does not follow from the fact that everyone *has values*, or finds things valuable, that these things *are valuable*, or ought to be regarded by all as valuable. It is natural to wonder, *why* should we respect those who refuse to respect others, who blatantly disregard even the minimum demands of a morality of respect for persons? To be blunt, are not some people, as a former colleague would say, “moral garbage,” mere “scum” that pollutes rather than enriches life for the rest of humanity? How can we respect such people in any meaningful sense? Why suppose that we are committed to respecting those who have done nothing to *earn* it? Even if we grant that everyone initially is owed some respect as a human being, is there any reason to deny that some extremely bad characters, by their immoral deeds, *forfeit* all respect, justifying our viewing them with utter contempt?

These are the issues to which I turn in this second lecture. Whereas before we focused on *how* to respect humanity (in multicultural contexts), we now ask *why* and *within what limits*? These are large questions that I cannot pretend to answer adequately here. What I can offer is only a sketch of some ways a Kantian

might interpret and respond to them. The sketch is meant partly to reflect Kant's own basic strategy of argument, fine points aside, and partly to suggest lines of response, broadly consistent with Kant's ethics, that might be developed more fully in time.

1. *Respect for Humanity vs. Respect for Merit:*
Reformulation of the Issues

One might suppose, mistakenly, that doubts about the propriety of respecting *all* human beings could be dismissed by making a simple distinction. To those who think that we should respect only those who have *earned* respect, for example, we can imagine an analytic-minded philosopher responding as follows. We need a distinction, he or she says, between two kinds of respect: *respecting persons for their merits* and *respecting persons for their social positions*.¹ Consider the first. When we mean to acknowledge the present of individuals' distinctive merit or excellence, we can say such things as "One must respect Perlman as a violinist," "She won the respect of the team for her efforts," "I respect him as a politician, but not as a saxophonist," "I respect her as an artist, but not as a person." Respect here amounts to confidence in a person's ability or esteem for her excellence in a context of comparative or scalar evaluation.

Again, we often respect persons for *performing well in a social position*, but then we are not respecting them merely because they occupy the position but rather because they are good at the tasks associated with the position. When we have in mind respect for merit, for example, to say "I respect her as a lawyer" means "I respect her because she is a *good* lawyer," not "I respect her because she *is* a lawyer." For similar reasons, respecting someone as a safe-cracker does not mean respecting the person simply *because* he or

¹ See Stephen Darwall, "Two Concepts of Respect," *Ethics* 88 (1977): 36–40. His terms are "appraisal respect" and "recognition respect." A similar distinction is an important part of my discussions in *Autonomy and Self-Respect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), especially chapters 1 and 11.

she *is* a safecracker but rather respecting the person for his or her safecracking skills.

Now consider the second kind of respect: respect for a person's social position. Suppose someone says, "She has not been a particularly good mother, but she is my mother, after all, and I must respect her as such." Here the point is not to make a comparative evaluation, but rather to acknowledge that merely holding a certain position, or standing in a certain relation to another, is sometimes enough to warrant a (presumptive) claim of respect. This should not be surprising because social roles, positions, and relationships are often defined in normative terms, by the rights, responsibilities, and privileges that are constitutive of them. To take another example, suppose I say, "I cannot abide his views, and I do not trust him, but he is, after all, the president, and we must respect him as such." Here I would imply that office-holders are to be respected on account of the position they hold, not because they are doing well at fulfilling that position.

How is this distinction relevant to our concerns? Consider our previous question, whether we must respect those who refuse to respect others. Now armed with the distinction between two kinds of respect, our hypothetical defender of the Kantian position might try to dismiss this worry as a mere verbal confusion. Of course, he or she might say, immoral, vicious people do not deserve *respect* in the first sense, for they are not especially good or meritorious as persons; but, nonetheless, we must *respect* them *as human beings*, in the second sense, for *humanity* (or being human) is itself a moral status or position that calls for respectful recognition. In support, he or she might cite the point, noted by Locke and others, that "person" often functions as a "forensic notion," defined, as it were, as "one who possesses such and such rights and duties." Similarly, he or she might argue, the terms "humanity" and "human being" are often used as labels for those presumed to have a certain moral status worthy of respect. If so, it seems we can coherently respect even viciously immoral people *as human beings*,

even though, as individuals, they fall far short of how human beings should conduct themselves.

This reply calls attention to an important distinction, but it fails to meet the underlying concern of those who wonder why they should respect all human beings. To be sure, if we share the same moral attitudes, we may come to conceive of “being human” as a moral status with given rights and duties, just as aristocrats once conceived of “being a duke” as a quasi-moral status with rights and duties. In this context of agreement, to say “She is a human being, so treat her accordingly,” would be a way of expressing a familiar moral judgment. This would be like saying, in an earlier time, “He is a duke, so treat him accordingly.” But playing with these conceptual implications will not get us very far toward a deep justification. Even if it is, for some speakers, a tautology that human beings should be treated with respect, we may still wonder why we should elevate even the most vicious members of our biological species to the normative status of “human being.” Similarly, even if, for some, “Dukes are entitled to special honor” is true by definition, we may still doubt whether certain corrupt characters who were called “dukes” are entitled to that richly normative label. Building entitlements into the definition of the terms “human being” and “duke” makes it all too easy to defend the propositions “Human beings should be respected” and “Dukes are owed special honor,” for it simply turns them into tautologies. Once we do this, however, the moral controversy merely shifts to another question, namely, what entitles anyone to the labels “human being” and “duke”? We may still wonder why respect *this or that particular* lying freeloader or sociopathic murderer.

The moral of these linguistic reflections is simple: although the demand to *respect people as human beings* treats “being human” (or “having humanity”) as a moral status, it leaves open to question what rights and responsibilities should belong to that position. “Respect her as a human being” does not mean “Esteem her as a

comparatively superior human being” but rather “Accord her all the respect (presumptively) due to anyone who has the status of being human.” But specifically *what* respect is (presumptively) due to all human beings, and whether it can be forfeited, so far remains an open issue. Given this, our initial question about why we should respect all human beings can be reexpressed, in a more refined way, as follows: (1) *Why grant to all members of our species, or even to all with certain basic normative capacities, a moral status (of “humanity”) that includes the presumption that anyone who has the status should be respected by all?*

If we can answer these concerns about the *presumption* that respect is owed to every human being, then a further question still arises: (2) *Granted that all human beings have a defeasible right to respect as human beings, is there any reason to suppose that they cannot forfeit this right?* This question is pressing because analogies suggest that all role rights can be forfeited by gross misconduct. For example, even though “doctor” and “president” refer to roles that are usually accorded a presumption of due respect, some doctors and presidents are so corrupt that, by general agreement, they forfeit their initial claims to respect on account of their positions.

Suppose that we can see *some good reasons* for trying to respect even the worst persons as human beings *if this is possible and compatible with our other responsibilities*. Our agreement with Kant that no one can altogether forfeit respect as a human being would still be *conditional* on satisfying ourselves regarding a remaining question: (3) *How, in practice, can we defend ourselves, punish criminals, and express our outrage at bigotry and corruption if we must treat all the unjust, corrupt bigots with respect?* This question seems pressing especially if we come to doubt the answer so often given in theory, but rarely in practice, namely, “Condemn and despise the sin, but not the sinner.” With experience, we may well wonder: Is this psychologically possible? Even

so, would it really be respectful? Can we respect either ourselves or the perpetrators of heinous crimes if we refuse to hold them *responsible* for their choices?²

In what follows, I address all of these concerns briefly. To preview: First, I sketch a Kantian line of reasoning for the presumption that respect is owed to all human beings. There are two main steps, outlined in the next two sections: (1) a description of a Kantian moral framework and efforts to show that this articulates and develops moral concepts to which we are already committed and (2) a claim that some formal requirements of respect are implicit in the Kantian framework and more substantive requirements can be defended by reasoning from it. Second, I consider how a Kantian perspective might lead us, for moral and practical reasons, to try to adopt the attitude that no one can completely forfeit all respect as a human being, provided this is possible and compatible with our other responsibilities. Third, to satisfy the last proviso, I suggest reasons for thinking that basic respect for all humanity, as understood here, is possible and fully compatible with our responsibilities to protect ourselves, to support just punishment, and to censure the perpetrators of evil (not merely their “deeds”).

Together, these points have important practical implications regarding how we can legitimately respond to immorality and crime. We should respect even vicious and unremorseful people *as human beings*, but we can do so without tolerating their behavior, trusting them to reform, or forgiving them. Far from being empty, however, the requirement of respect limits the kinds of moral censure and punishment that we can fairly use. The Kantian ideal of respect should also temper our responses on campus to

² The general policy of separating the “sin” from the “sinner,” condemning the former while never attributing blameworthiness to the perpetrators, seems disrespectful to oneself as it denies one the expression of legitimate resentment and indignation, and it seems disrespectful of the offender because it places him or her in a category outside normal interactive moral relationships.

those whom we believe to be racists and sexists, replacing contemptuous dismissal with firm but respectful confrontation.

2. *Interpreting the Issue: Why Should We Respect All Human Beings?*

At first glance, this seems a simple question, for we are used to many ways of answering questions of the form “Why should we . . . ?” On reflection, however, it is not so obvious how we should understand the question. What sort of answer might one be looking for? Often we answer “Why should we . . . ?” questions by pointing out desirable consequences, but the basic Kantian claim is not amenable to this sort of defense. Even if we could show empirical evidence that adopting a policy of universal respect proves to be generally advantageous to everyone, this would not justify holding it, as Kantians do, as a deep, necessary feature of the basic moral framework for deliberating about all specific issues. Granting everyone due respect is a basic moral requirement not derivative from the desirability of promoting other good consequences. Although it is a welcome fact that according people due respect tends to promote other goods, Kantians take the principle of respect for humanity as standing independently of this fact and serving as a limit to what we may legitimately do in our efforts to promote the general welfare.

Again, given Kantian denials of intuitionism, naturalism, and sentimentalism as theories of value, it is not open to “justify” respect for humanity by pretending to find “in” humanity some intuitable, natural, or sentiment-evoking property of “worthiness of respect.”

Kant himself wrote eloquently of the reverence and awe that seem forced from us as we contemplate “the moral law within,” and this may suggest that Kant’s only ground for making universal respect so central in his ethics is his belief that everyone will, necessarily but inexplicably, “find” that this moral predisposition commands their respect wherever it is found, even in those who in fact

flagrantly fail to follow it. One famous passage in Kant's *Groundwork*, in fact, might seem to offer just this sort of argument. That is, one might take Kant to be arguing as follows: All of us first recognize "humanity" in ourselves; we cannot help but regard this humanity in us as "Awesome!" ("an end in itself," loosely interpreted) ; seeing that the "awesome" thing is also in every other moral agent, we should acknowledge that the same attitude is appropriate to humanity in everyone;³ hence we should respect everyone's humanity.

Now even if Kant at times suggests this sort of argument, it does not provide the kind of deep grounding that one might hope to find for his central principle of respect for humanity. Many will no doubt refuse to concede that they find either "humanity" or "the moral law within" as awesome as Kant does, and by Kant's own principles he should not be appealing either to intuition or to contingent sentiments (as, it seems, the argument above does) to support his account of the basic features of the moral point of view. One might try to argue that the initial recognition of humanity as "awesome" is neither an intuition nor an emotional response, but rather a *necessary* aspect of a *rational* agent's inevitable consciousness of being subject to moral constraints (i.e., part of "the fact of reason" that Kant discusses in his second Critique).⁴ But, for this proposal to amount to more than an appeal to "intuition" or common sentiment, it needs to be more fully explained *why* seeing one's own "humanity" as an "end in itself" is necessarily something we do *because we are rational*.⁵

³ See Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), 96. The argument would be fallacious in moving to the requirement to respect humanity in others if what one recognized in oneself was just that one's own humanity was of great value to oneself (as, perhaps, one sees one's own pleasures). The argument presupposes that one sees humanity, in one's own case, as *in itself respect-worthy*, not just something valuable to one because it is one's own.

⁴ *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis W. Beck, 3rd edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1993), 30–32.

⁵ Even if it gives a plausible reading of Kant's argument, the fuller explanation needed would make the argument in question far more complex than the simple,

What, then, is the Kantian ground for the idea that we should respect all human beings as such? With apparent simplicity we can say, as commentators often do, that the ground is “humanity” itself, or “rational nature,” or “autonomy.” This, however, only indicates *what* qualifies moral agents as objects of basic respect as human beings; it does not spell out *why*. The reference (to “humanity,” etc.) points to what *Kant believed* a creature needs in order to be owed such respect; but it does not, by itself, provide an argument that addresses the concerns of those who have yet to accept the Kantian moral framework. Is there more we can do?

We can “justify” some features of a system of thought by showing their connections with other beliefs we share, for example, by showing how they are entailed or presupposed by deep and pervasive commitments that we would find difficult, if not impossible, to discard. Proofs and “justifying” arguments come to an end at some point, but we can often satisfy the actual “Why should we . . . ?” concerns that prompt the search for justifications. Sometimes we do this by revealing that the “We should . . .” in question turns out to be, in effect, the expression of an attitude to which we are already committed by other beliefs and attitudes that we see no adequate reason to abandon. The conceptual connections may be far from self-evident, revealing themselves only by deep analysis of the normative concepts we employ. The mode of argument, then, would not be quick appeal to intuition, linguistic or otherwise, but a process of gradually unfolding and articulating more clearly the implications of modes of thought that we actually rely upon and could not give up, at least not without radical re-orientation of our lives.

This is the sort of “justification,” I believe, that Kant offers in response to the concerns underlying the question “Why should we

facile (“intuitive”) line of thought that the interpretations I am examining in this section take it to be. That fuller account would need, I think, to make use of at least some of the background ideas that I develop in the next two sections. Thus, although I believe there is something to the proposed interpretation, I shall not try to develop it here.

respect all human beings ?” Briefly, we *should* because such respect is an essential aspect of the moral framework for deliberation to which we are in fact committed by our concept of ourselves as moral agents, subject to duties, once this is properly understood. In the next sections, I describe some general features of the Kantian moral framework (as I reconstruct it) and sketch strategies Kant suggests for showing that in fact we presuppose it. Then, in the following section, I consider how this basic moral framework leads to the presumption that all human beings should be respected in certain (formal and substantive) ways. As always for Kant, “we should” refers to what “we would” do *if*, though able and sometimes tempted to do otherwise, we acted in a fully rational way. “Why should we . . . ?” questions, then, in effect translate into questions about what is rational, or reasonable, for us to do.⁶

3. *The Kantian Moral Framework and Kant’s Strategies for Showing It Presupposed in Common Moral Concepts*

Kantian ethics acknowledges a need for a common moral framework for thinking about specific moral issues. That is, its ambition is to attempt to resolve more particular controversies by appeal to widely shared standards for moral deliberation and argument, standards providing criteria regarding what is morally relevant and procedures for working toward reasonable resolutions of conflict. Many familiar perspectives on morality (for example, those inherent in various religious sects) quite frankly call for an antecedent conversion to a quite specific value system. Thus, they do not well serve, and were not meant to serve, the desired mediating role of a general framework for discussion, mutually acceptable to a wide range of people with diverse moral convictions. Utilitarianism, in its several forms, has been attractive partly be-

⁶ As will be evident, I often use “reasonable” to express in commonsense terms what Kant seems often to mean by “rational.” The latter term in recent times is usually used to describe conclusions based entirely on instrumental reasoning and individual preferences rather than prescriptions based on thinking from the common point of view of all moral agents (i.e., what I call “reasonable”).

cause it seems to serve that mediating role, in effect asking people who are quarreling over particular day-to-day moral issues to frame their disputes in terms of a common overarching commitment to whatever seems, on best evidence, to promote the greatest satisfaction of human preferences, impartially considered. Utilitarian theories, however, raise many (now familiar) problems, most notably that, even though committed to “counting” each person’s preferences, they leave open the possibility that, in the end, the good of some may be totally sacrificed to satisfy the preferences of others.

What I propose, then, is to sketch an alternative moral framework, drawn from Kant, which is meant, like utilitarianism, to be a mode of thinking that can help to mediate moral disputes. But, unlike utilitarianism, this Kantian alternative refuses to reduce moral deliberation to unconstrained quantitative thinking that treats all individual aspirations as just so many preferences in a common pool, which are to be denied or approved according to a global maximizing strategy. The framework I shall sketch is Kantian in a broad sense because it draws from several of Kant’s formulas of the Categorical Imperative, but I have not time here either to trace its heritage or to fill in all the necessary details.

The basic idea is that, for purposes of thinking about what particular moral principles we should endorse, how they are to be interpreted, and what exceptions should hold, we can appropriately think of moral principles as principles that all *reasonable* human beings would accept, as justifiable to themselves and others, under certain ideal conditions. The idea of the “reasonable” here, as in John Rawls’s work, is broader than the idea of “the rational,” as contemporary decision theorists understand this; for reasonableness includes a willingness to reciprocate with others on mutually agreeable terms.⁷

⁷ Commonsense and Kantian ideas of the reasonable, as I understand them in contrast with other models of the rational, are discussed more fully in my paper “Reasonable Self-Interest,” in *Social Philosophy and Policy* (forthcoming, 1997).

The conditions for ideal reasonable legislation include sober and realistic awareness of the contexts in which the principles are to be applied, sensitivity to the diverse values that people have, willingness to set aside personal differences that are morally irrelevant to the task, and effort to review principles on their merits, without undue reliance on one's own familiar traditions, antecedent cultural or religious loyalties, and personal attachments.⁸ A key stipulation is that each person, in reviewing possible moral requirements, must acknowledge that, ideally, every person subject to the requirements shares equally the authority to make and interpret them. Everyone is, as it were, an equal co-legislator in what Kant calls "a kingdom of ends," in which the legislators together must "make" the "laws," settling on moral standards that, they agree, should take precedence over their individual policies. That is, they are seen as, ideally, the joint authors of principles that trump the policies that *otherwise* they might adopt to satisfy their personal desires.

This ideal "moral legislation" is not arbitrary but is supposed to be guided by legislators' mutual commitment to essential features of a moral perspective that, like constitutional constraints, are not themselves "legislated." The latter, basic ideas implicit in the various forms of the Categorical Imperative, are meant to be constitutive aspects of the ideal of living in community with other free, equal, and reasonable moral agents who constrain their personal pursuits by mutually agreed standards. We are to think of substantive moral principles, beyond the constitutive standards, as binding a person only if they are justifiable to that person insofar as that person too considers the issue from the ideal perspective of a co-legislator. Thus, human beings are viewed as if they were

Unfortunately, the same term serves for both the rational and the reasonable in Kant's texts.

⁸ My idea of Kantian moral "legislation" as a framework for deliberating about more specific issues and various problems it raises are discussed more fully in "A Kantian Perspective on Moral Rules," *Philosophical Perspectives* 6 (1992): 285–304.

jointly authors of binding principles and individually subject to them, once the principles are finally decided.

In this ideal model, all moral agents are assumed to have *autonomy*, which means, in part, that no one is morally bound by demands imposed from any other source, unless such demands are backed by more basic principles that all rational agents with autonomy would accept. Autonomy implies, further, that in moral legislation one does not accept principles simply because they are traditional, currently accepted, sanctioned by religious authorities, or especially favorable to the interests of one particular group rather than another. The *humanity* of each person is treated by the others as an “end in itself,” at least in the “thin” sense that the “reasonable will” of each person, along with every other, is what counts as the final authority. Hence all accept the constraints that they jointly will as legislators, giving them priority over the various (contingent) ends and means that otherwise they might like to adopt. That is, if they believe that the appropriate joint deliberation of all who have humanity, or reasonable wills, would converge on certain general principles, then they acknowledge those principles as the final, unconditional authority regarding what ends they should seek and what means they may, and may not, use.

The general idea here has affinities, not only with Kant, but with Rousseau’s political ideal, John Rawls’s theory of justice, Thomas Scanlon’s idea of moral justification, and no doubt other views as well. Many details need to be filled in, and problems must be faced, before any heuristic model of this kind can be fairly assessed or confidently used. But, long before that, it is natural to wonder: What could lead one to think of ideal moral reflection in this way? Kant tried to show that the Kantian legislative perspective is implicit in the attitudes of ordinary conscientious people. His reasoning took two lines, which converged on the main point.

One line of thought starts this way. What fundamental priorities express the attitude of conscientious persons, independently of the specific views they may have about what is right and what is

wrong? Well, at least this: they have the attitude that if they judge, upon full and reasonable deliberation, that they are morally required to do something, then they must do that, even if other goods have to be sacrificed. In other words, they treat what Kant calls their “good will” as good “above all else,” “without qualification.”⁹ This is not to say that they hold that morality generally requires the radical sacrifice of other goods, such as health, wealth, knowledge, and happiness; it means only that, if the only way they can gain one of these other goods is by doing what they are convinced is wrong, then they are committed to foregoing that other good. This is an old and, to many, trivial point: one should not sell one’s soul (or moral integrity) for anything, no matter how attractive it may appear. So far, of course, this tells us nothing substantive about what sorts of acts are immoral; but it reveals a conscientious attitude as one that accepts that there are reasonable constraints on the pursuit of personal goods, including happiness. Upon further analysis, this attitude is revealed as a matter of *respect* for moral principle, something distinct from wanting to achieve a desired goal.” The attitude turns out, on reflection, to be respect for “objective principles”: that is, principles to which anyone, *if fully reasonable*, would conform his or her personal policies (“maxims”).¹¹

Another line of thought runs in the same direction, but a bit further.” Different people have different ideas about what particular duties they have, but what is it *in common* that they are thinking when they think they are morally required to do or to refrain from various acts? For one thing, they think they *ought* to do it; and this thought may be interpreted as the idea that what they ought to do is what, upon full and reasonable deliberation,

⁹ *Groundwork*, 61–62.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 69–70, especially 69n.

¹² The following paragraphs, to the end of this section, are meant to be a very loose reconstruction of lines of thought in *Groundwork*, chapter 2, esp. 80–104.

they would do if completely rational and reasonable, though they are quite aware that they might not do it.

There are many things, however, that they believe they ought to do that they do not regard as *moral* requirements, and so more must be said. The something more is apparently this: when conscientious persons accept something as a moral requirement, they see it as nonoptional, that is, as what they ought to do, whether or not they feel like doing it, and not just because it serves their personal interests. Unlike what is “necessary” to fulfill an optional plan, they feel, one cannot simply change one’s plans and thereby escape the “ought” judgment. What accounts for their sense that they “must” or “ought” to do what they believe is morally required, then, is not their belief that doing it will get them something they want, such as wealth, friendship, or happiness. Since thinking one *ought* to do something, in general, implies thinking that it is reasonable to do, they must presuppose that there is some other kind of reason why they ought to fulfill particular moral requirements. They must, then, be presupposing, among their deep commitments, some general principle, or point of view, that would explain why they regard it as reasonable to judge that they ought, on particular occasions, to do the morally required things, whether they want to or not.¹³ In other words, they are committed to there being some standards of reasonable conduct, which they count as

¹³ The point is independent of whether there is general agreement on the particular duty. Some may think that it is a duty to lie on a certain occasion, and others think that it is a duty not to lie; but what they have in common is the supposition that reason requires them to do the various things that they believe to be morally required, whether this serves their particular wants and plans or not. And this, presumably, needs explanation and support from a more general account of what it is to be reasonable. As I noted earlier, I am systematically substituting “reasonable” for “rational” in the discussion of moral deliberation because I think this is less misleading to modern audiences. Also note that the argument presupposes an internalist view of reasons and “ought”; that is, if I judge that I have reasons to do something, or ought to do it, I am thereby to some degree disposed to do it and I acknowledge that there is something I favor or am committed to that is positively connected with it. “Committed” here, though, does not mean wholeheartedly or all-considered finally resolved to do it, but leaves open that I could merely acknowledge its “authority,” believe it is what I would do if doing my best, etc.

authoritative for them, that indicate that certain things ought, and others ought not, to be done, and not just because this serves the specific aims and interests that the agent happens to have.

To put the thought in Kant's terms, the idea of duty presupposes that there is a Categorical Imperative, that is, a general principle reasonable for all, that can guide moral judgment and support particular moral beliefs. This cannot be merely the Hypothetical Imperative, "It is rational to take the necessary means to your ends," for this supports no requirement independent of one's aims and wants.¹⁴

At this point we must look around for candidates. Most alleged moral principles are too specific and substantive to be plausibly advanced as principles reasonable for everyone to adopt, no matter how diverse their aims, values, and traditional ties. For example, "Follow the will of the god X," "Follow the example of those judged wisest and best in your community," "Live by the code of your ancestors," "Obey the law," "Follow the promptings of your natural sympathy"; all these, and many more, are too limited in application, or too controversial in their priorities, or both, to gain wide acceptance as the comprehensive, universally reasonable standard that people who believe in moral requirements presuppose as the source of these requirements. Many people may be persuaded to accept them, but why should one expect all reasonable people, regardless of their particular differences, to find such specific, substantive principles authoritative for them? If they fear the consequences of violating tradition, law, or religious precepts, this would make conformity to those principles quite sensible, but it could not justify thinking of them as *moral requirements*, that is, as how one ought to act, regardless of one's personal wants, hopes, and fears.¹⁵

¹⁴ My understanding of this nonmoral general principle of reason is more fully spelled out in my collection of essays on Kant's ethics, *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant's Moral Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), chapters 1 and 7.

¹⁵ See *Groundwork*, 108–12, and contrast 88. Here I try merely to articulate the spirit of Kant's opposition to substantive accounts of the fundamental moral principle, deliberately omitting Kant's more direct lines of argument for his "universal law" formula of the Categorical Imperative and its relation to later formulas.

The inadequacy of the other candidates to explain the idea of duty makes the Kantian proposal look more promising. The core idea is that the Categorical Imperative, that most comprehensive principle behind the belief in particular duties, is “conform to universal law,” which, liberally reconstructed, means to restrict one’s personal acts and policies to those compatible with whatever general principles everyone would accept if “legislating” from the moral perspective that I sketched earlier. Morally binding “laws” are not to be found in a vision of Plato’s world of Forms, in God’s mind, or in secular conceptions of nature. Rather, we must try to work out together what a moral point of view requires in various situations by trying to think realistically, to transcend particular biases and special interests, and to find a common core of ideals and standards that we can justify to each other, despite our differences. What makes this formal prescription a candidate for being a “principle of reason” is that what it enjoins is simply an interpretation, for the human condition, of the abstract rule “Govern yourself, constrain your desires and plans, according to what is reasonable.” The interpretation, which begins to add some teeth to the precept, holds that what is reasonable is (ideally) to be worked out jointly in ongoing, mutually respectful deliberations in which everyone must try to justify proposed policies and principles to everyone else who is willing to reciprocate.¹⁶

4. *Formal Respect for All Implicit in the Kantian Moral Framework and Substantive Respect Defensible from It.*

The Kantian moral perspective implicitly contains within it an important, though relatively formal, requirement of respect. In accepting moral constraints as what, ideally, all human beings would agree upon in reasonable joint deliberations, we are, in a sense, respecting each person as a potential co-legislator of the

¹⁶ Here I interpret and extend ideas Kant presents in *Groundwork*, 88–104, along lines discussed more fully in *Dignity and Practical Reason in Kant’s Moral Theory*, and some later essays, including “Donagan’s Kant,” *Ethics* 104 (1993): 22–52.

basic principles we must all live by. The aim is to see that our conduct can be justified to others who are able and willing to take up the moral point of view. This does not mean that we may do only what others like, but only that we must avoid conduct that we believe would be prohibited by principles that all reasonable people (taking the moral perspective) would agree on.¹⁷

If some people are not now willing and able to deliberate morally, though they have the potential capacity to do so, their interests and voice can to some extent be represented by proxy: that is, by others trying to give weight to what those not now able to deliberate would agree to if they could and would take up the requisite point of view.” In this way we may think of children as

¹⁷ Perhaps it is worth calling readers’ attention here to an important qualification I introduce later when trying to accommodate the ideal Kantian model to the reality that reasonable people will not always agree: that is, one can view the model as a standard of individual *conscientious decision*, rather than *moral truth*. Moral truth, one might say, would be the ideal point on which all reasonable persons’ moral deliberations would converge. But since we do not often know that, we can say that a conscientious choice is one based on what, after due deliberation, consultation, and taking seriously the opinions of others, the moral agent sincerely judges to be the best candidate for reasonable acceptance by all, even though he or she is aware that reasonable people may disagree.

¹⁸ In this way, I am supposing, infants (at least all but the severely brain damaged) might have their interests represented and protected. Those who can now deliberate morally must do so in such a way that they could reasonably hope to justify their principles, eventually, to all with “humanity,” the basic capacities and dispositions that enable a person to be a moral agent in human conditions. These capacities can be ready and developed, as Kant seemed to be supposing in most of his ethical writings; or they could be latent, as in young children. Much discussion would be required to decide, as interpretation of Kant or as independently defensible theory, where to draw these lines; but for now I assume that those with the latent capacities of humanity (e.g., young children) are among those to whom moral deliberators must try to imagine themselves justifying their policies. This involves trying to estimate, difficult as this might be, what the children would say was justifiable treatment when they are mature, aware of their basic human needs, but have not lost sight of their childhood interests. Alternatively, perhaps the hypothetical justification should be addressed to proxies who both understand and are fully devoted to the children’s interests. These issues, I realize, are too complex and difficult to resolve here, and the same can be said of fetuses, the comatose, the permanently retarded, etc. They are issues that should not be swept aside; for unless they can be satisfactorily addressed within a Kantian framework, that framework remains subject to significant doubt.

represented in the moral deliberation process, even though not now ready actually to take part.¹⁹

A different sort of proxy argument from the Kantian framework might call for decent treatment, kindness, and even a kind of “respect” for nonhuman animals and members of our species born without any potential for moral deliberation; but such an argument, obviously, could not support a presumption of *respect for them as* (even potentially) *fellow “legislators” of moral principles*.

Although I shall not try to construct the argument for decent treatment of animals and brain-damaged human beings here, one point at least is worth noting now. Critics often assume that basic Kantian ethics can offer no better case for decent treatment of animals than the contingent, empirical argument Kant himself offered for an “indirect” duty not to be cruel to animals: that is, cruelty to animals is likely to foster habits of cruelty that are likely to be turned against human beings.²⁰ A common cause of this mistaken assumption, I suspect, is a confusion between the essential point in basic Kantian theory that “humanity” is *the source of moral duties* and the independent and, I believe, inessential point (un-

¹⁹ The same might be said for any adults whom we *knew* to be so blindly devoted to *authorities* for answers to moral questions that they actually cannot yet engage in reasonable deliberation about moral issues on any other ground. Jeffrie Murphy feared that my presentation implied that many Roman Catholics must be denied basic respect because of their loyalty to their church and Scriptures; but I cannot see how this follows from my reconstructed Kantian view. First, it would be arrogantly presumptuous to suppose we *know* that the believers in question have no grasp of the moral considerations themselves, only blind acceptance of “orders” understood only as that. Typically, to the contrary, Catholics that I know have a good sense of morality *together with* a faith that, properly understood, authoritative church prescriptions are based on good moral reasons. Second, even if a given believer is not currently able to engage in moral dialogue and deliberation with anything more than appeals to authority, the Kantian perspective, as I understand it, does not deny that person respect as a human being; for we have no good reason to suppose such a person permanently and unalterably unresponsive to moral considerations presented as reasons for action rather than as commands.

The practical point of insisting on active capacities of independent reflection, autonomy, etc., in the *ideal* of moral deliberation is not to deny respect to imperfect deliberators, but just to indicate that in our *hypothetical* reasoning from that ideal construct we need not imagine that good moral arguments are constrained by a need to convince people when they are relying exclusively on authority.

¹⁵ See *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 238.

fortunately also accepted by Kant) that “humanity” fully specifies and restricts the range of creatures toward whom we have direct moral duties. The latter implies, for example, not only that we have no duties “to” animals, but also that decent treatment of animals is morally required only insofar as indecent treatment of them would damage vital human interests. But this repugnant doctrine does not follow from the fundamental Kantian point that moral duties get their authority and direction from the ideal deliberations of reasonable human beings. If, as most of us believe, there are good reasons to deplore and prevent the needless suffering of animals, one should not assume, without further argument, that our reasonable Kantian moral “legislators” are precluded from taking these considerations into account and setting their moral standards accordingly. Some ways of expressing such reasons, admittedly, are incompatible with Kantian value theory, but we are not restricted to these.” The crucial point to remember in debates on this issue is that the fact that only human beings have moral duties (and the capacity to determine specifically what their duties are) does not entail that they can reasonably ignore the miseries of the beings who lack the capacity for morality but who nevertheless suffer in many of the ways that we do.

The idea of all human beings as potential co-legislators is admittedly a metaphor that abstracts in many ways from the imperfect conditions of real moral deliberation and discussion. Nevertheless, it is an ideal that makes vivid and brings together important aspects of what moral deliberation may be thought, at its best, to be. If we take the ideal seriously, we can see that it implicitly presupposes certain standards of respect that are, comparatively speaking, formal or procedural. For example, legislators

²¹ Here I have in mind, for example, the old utilitarian idea that pains, whether human or animal, are “bad in themselves,” where intrinsic badness is interpreted as a real metaphysical property that exists and is discernible as such independently of considerations about what it is reasonable to choose to pursue or to avoid. The contrast with a Kantian value theory, as I see it, is characterized in my *Autonomy and Self-Respect*, chapter 12.

sincerely trying to find reasonable agreements must *listen* to one another, take seriously the arguments of those who reject one's initial position. They must be *sincere* in their proposals and *non-manipulative* in their arguments, for their aim is not to gain power through debate but to *convince* others that their position is justifiable. Efforts to *broaden one's knowledge*, to *see issues from others' point of view*, and to *invite criticism* of one's reasoning are all needed in honest attempts to locate and remove the sources of disagreement. Granting that no one has privileged access to moral truth requires us to *acknowledge the fallibility* of our moral judgments when we realize that others sincerely disagree. Even when we acknowledge persons only as *potential co-legislators*, as we do with young children, this suggests we should promote the development of their capacities to become mature moral deliberators. There is reason, then, to make education undogmatic, to encourage critical thinking, empathy, and communicative skills. Manipulative, seductive, deceitful, and overpowering rhetoric should be out of bounds both in moral education and in public discussion of moral issues. All these requirements are implicit in the idea that all are potential authors of the moral law, and, importantly for our purposes, they are all forms of respect. Thus, to accept the Kantian moral framework itself is already to acknowledge at least a presumption that all human beings should be accorded these forms of respect in moral discussion and education, in the ways appropriate to their level of development.²²

Importantly, a ground for presuming more substantive requirements of respect for all human beings may be found when we actually try to take up the Kantian moral perspective,²³ rather than

²² Note that the first reason for the presumption of respect for all, which I try to draw from the moral perspective itself, corresponds to what I was thinking of in "Donagan's Kant" as the "thin" notion of humanity as an end in itself. It is a minimum kind of respect built into the relatively formal idea that morality requires treating what "humanity," or rational willing, in each person legislates as supremely authoritative over one's other concerns.

²³ By "substantive requirements of respect" I have in mind the more specific prescriptions, beyond those I have just labeled "formal," that I discussed in my first

merely thinking about the formal constraints implicit in it.²⁴ Each rational person, Kant says, necessarily regards his or her own humanity as an end in itself, on the same ground as do others; and so, Kant argues, we must regard humanity in every person as an end in itself. There are various ways to read this argument; some render it fallacious, others (including one I discussed earlier) merely make it implausible.²⁵ A more promising idea suggested by the passage is this. Suppose we ask what do people, despite their diverse backgrounds and values, typically regard as especially important, of highest priority, about themselves and how they are to be treated by others? Deep reflection, we can conjecture, will typically downgrade many of the momentary, superficial concerns we have and focus our attention on matters such as having a life, freedom, security, opportunities, self-respect, and the substantive forms of respect from others. We tend to regard concern for these things, which Kant associates with our “humanity,” as more than mere personal preferences, in fact as (objectively) higher-order values on which we have a legitimate claim. Placing a high priority on being respected for one’s humanity, or rational nature, may even be thought to be implicit in the common (rather thick) concept of a rational person, one who lives a life governed by reason.²⁶

lecture. Ideally, in a fuller argument, these would be reviewed and explained in detail, but for now I am concerned mainly to sketch the *pattern* of the argument from the Kantian legislative perspective to justify requiring more substantive forms of respect.

²⁴ This corresponds to my conjecture, in “Donagan’s Kant,” that one might argue from the moral perspective defined with a “thin” idea of humanity as an end to a “thicker” or richer normative conception of humanity as an end. The key would be arguing that any reasonable person who acknowledges all persons as “ends in themselves” in the thin sense would, because of some plausible but contingent premises about what people deeply care about, try to protect as nearly absolute (and as not subject to trade) certain other values that earlier (in *Dignity and Practical Reason*, chapter 2) I described as implicit in Kant’s idea of “humanity as an end in itself.” For example, the value of (honorable) life, not being deprived of one’s rational capacities, claims to a fair share of external liberty, symbolic expressions of respect from others, etc.

²⁵ See section 2, paragraphs 3 and 4, of this lecture.

²⁶ This suggestion is in line with the interpretation I mentioned but did not pursue in section 2, paragraph 4. I intend to return to this on another occasion.

In any case, the key assumption for present purposes is just that, in the absence of strong contrary evidence, we can reasonably presume that, when thinking clearly and deeply, people tend to place a high priority on being respected as human beings, in important substantive ways, independently of whatever respect they might earn for special merit.²⁷

Supposing this is generally true of human beings, then we all have reason to *propose* moral constraints to protect these essential or high-priority values, including substantial forms of respect, and on the same grounds we have reason to *hope that others will endorse* these constraints as well. In the moral legislative model, the condition of insisting on protection for oneself is willingness to concede that one must grant a similar protection for others. So, assuming, as I suggested, that having the respect in question is among the higher-priority shared values, then we can suppose that everyone deliberating from the Kantian legislative perspective would endorse at least the presumption that every human being is to be respected so far as possible in the substantive ways that we so highly value. Since not all human beings have special skills or unusual merit, compared to others, the respect we presume required cannot be *respect for a person's merit* but rather *respect for a person's position*, which in this case must be just the position of "being human."

Having now sketched the patterns of argument for presuming that respect for all human beings is morally required, we must face a *recurring objection*. Kant's arguments assume that all "human

²⁷ Note I did not say "absolute priority." The point is compatible with people thinking that they would sacrifice, subordinate, or only conditionally value the respect under some imaginary circumstances (e.g., if the price of insisting on universal respect was tolerance of evil). But if they realize that, as I suggest later, we could have and give an unconditional respect to every human being, as such, without losing our right to self-protection, moral criticism, and punishment, then they may see no need to qualify the value they place on such respect. We can conceive a world where everyone unconditionally respected every person as a human being (though not for merit), where this respect is never forfeited, without supposing that in that more respectful world we would have to tolerate, avoid censuring, or even try to like people who behave outrageously.

beings,” or persons with “humanity,” have, at least potentially, the capacity and predisposition to deliberate from a moral perspective and to act accordingly, and Kant apparently had faith that virtually all the (adult) people we are likely to meet, perhaps outside institutions for the insane, in fact have the essential attributes of “humanity.” Today, however, we may question this assumption. Are there reasonable doubts sufficient to undermine even the modest claim that we should, *for practical purposes, presume* that all the cognitively competent, functioning people we encounter in daily life qualify for our respect as human beings?

Kant, like most others in his era, seemed to accept without much question the predisposition to morality as a basic feature of human nature.²⁸ He granted that human beings have, in addition, an innate tendency to evil, but even that, as Kant interpreted it, was just a tendency, under temptation, to refuse to follow a moral law that in our hearts we acknowledge as authoritative for us.²⁹ No human being, he supposed, loves evil for evil’s sake; and no one mature enough to understand morality could be indifferent to it. Even the worst murderers when facing the gallows, he thought, could not help but feel remorse and sense the justice of their punishment. There are two aspects to the human will: one, our practical reason (*Wille*), acknowledges the reasonableness of moral considerations and makes us respect their authority; the other, our power of choice (*Willkur*), enables us to choose in practice to follow that authority or else to violate it. A moral choice, Kant thought, preserves integrity and self-esteem, but an immoral choice inevitably results in internal conflict of will and discontent with oneself; conscience, an internal judge, is inescapable.³⁰

Are there, despite Kant’s faith, functioning adult members of our biological species who do not have, even potentially, the ca-

²⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 21–23.

²⁹ *Religion*, 23–40.

³⁰ *The Metaphysics of Morals*, 233–35.

capacity for morality? There are several different categories to consider. First, literature is full of grand tales about *defiant immoralists*, who, like Milton's fallen angel, take as their motto, "Evil, be thou my good!" There are also stories about completely *innocent amoralists*, who somehow manage to grow up and interact with others, like gentle but intelligent animals, but remain conscience-free and impervious to moral concepts. Turning from fiction to more troublesome real cases, *sociopaths*, we are told, can have an intellectual grasp of moral concepts but remain inwardly unmoved by them. They can manipulate others by moral arguments, but, having never internalized any moral standards, they have no conscience to violate.

Obviously, the severely brain damaged can lack moral capacities, but our question is a more difficult one: Can human beings with a full range of cognitive and linguistic capacities nonetheless be *utterly unable* to acknowledge and be moved by moral considerations? If so, our previous Kantian arguments would apparently give us no reason for respecting them as human beings, for those arguments presupposed that they were potentially among those whose acknowledgment of the basic moral framework made them respect-worthy co-legislators of moral principles. Even if morality is like a fair, mutually beneficial game for all who can accept and play by its rules, we could not be sure that everyone has the *ability* to do so. Given this, for all we know, some who otherwise appear mature and responsible adults deserve neither the benefits nor the burdens of being respected as human beings with moral capacities. It is often thought, for example, that empirical evidence shows that this is how "sociopaths" should be viewed.

The issue, whether in fact those labeled "sociopaths" really lack all capacity and disposition to morality, can be settled only by empirical investigation, not philosophical speculation. It should be noted, however, that the issue is not as easy to revolve as it might seem at first. Sociopaths no doubt display ample evidence that they *do not* constrain themselves by familiar moral principles, but much

more is needed to demonstrate that they *cannot*. They have developed their amoral habits and policies in response to particular circumstances, and we lack adequate evidence whether they would remain equally unresponsive in all circumstances. Perhaps they have seen all too well how cynically some self-professed moralists use moral discourse to their own advantage. Perhaps they have never experienced anything they trusted as genuine, rather than self-serving, judgmental, and manipulative, moral discourse and interaction with others. Like everyone else, they display evidence of their predispositions by their responses in a certain corner of our very imperfect world, which is not a world ideally designed always to bring out a latent moral predisposition if there is one. Therapists working within a mental health model are not trained or expected to engage their clients in genuine moral dialogue, as equals, providing the recalcitrant with the good and sincere moral arguments needed to elicit a moral response if that is possible. So a sociopath's resistance to therapy is not necessarily the same as irremediable insensitivity to moral concerns.

Given our ignorance or uncertainty about the empirical issue, there is a practical moral consideration that should suffice to make us quite reluctant to identify classes of aware and functioning people as nonetheless utterly lacking in the potential for morality. History is stained with a bloody record of what happens when people too lightly dismiss as "inhuman" other people they dislike and fail to understand. Greeks thought the barbarians incapable of reason and virtue; Europeans and early Americans viewed black Africans and their descendents that way; and there is a long record of men thinking that women are human enough to follow, but not to lead, to be gentle and compassionate, but not to be just and courageous. We are obviously tempted to take the failure of others to conform to *our own* moral ideas as sufficient evident that they *cannot* think morally and do not deserve the respect of moral dialogue. Since this temptation has been for centuries an unfair source of misery to people misjudged to be "less than human," it seems

wise to counteract the temptation with a strong contrary presumption that, until *proved* otherwise, virtually all the cognitively able and functioning people we meet have at least the *potential* capacity and disposition to engage with others in mutually respectful, reciprocal moral relations.

Since we must act under uncertainty about whether sociopaths, and other apparent amoralists, are *incapable* of morality, we risk error however we treat them. The practical question, then, is: which error would be worse? From a moral point of view, I suggest, it is generally worse to risk denying respect where it is due than to risk granting respect where it is not due. In the first case, we risk wrongfully casting a potentially responsible human being out of the moral community, whereas in the second case we only risk wasting our moral scruples where they are not needed. So, again, for practical purposes, we should presume that respect is due to all.

5. *Conditional Grounds for Refusing to Allow That Basic Respect Can Be Forfeited*

Assuming for now that there is a strong presumption that every human being should be respected as such, can they, by persistent and unrepentant immorality, *forfeit* all the respect that was presumptively due to them as human beings? In other words, can a person's conduct be so contemptuous of others that it defeats and cancels our (presumed) obligation to respect him or her as a human being? Many seem to think so; Kant did not, but, in any case, it is a practically important, but complex, issue.

To avoid misunderstanding, note that *forfeiting* occurs when *moral agents*, who are responsible for their actions, violate important rules so flagrantly that their *culpable* misconduct removes from others the moral obligation to treat those persons (in certain respects) as otherwise their standing would have required. Thus, for example, an ordinary felon forfeits a right to vote, and club members delinquent in their dues may forfeit their club privileges.

If a creature that we formerly took to be a responsible moral agent did things so wild, destructive, and unresponsive to reason that we concluded that we owed “it” utterly no moral consideration, this would not necessarily be a matter of judging that a person *forfeited* all his or her rights. Forfeit presupposes responsible moral agency, and our changed attitude might simply reflect our opinion that earlier we misjudged the *causal responsible* agent to be morally responsible as well. Rather than grounds for forfeit, the person’s deplorable conduct may be viewed as evidence that we have misclassified the agent, supposing “it” more like an animal or an unsocialized, wild child than a responsible human adult.

Two quick caveats are needed here. First, there are strong practical and moral reasons, as I noted earlier, for being very reluctant to reclassify any functioning adult as “merely an animal,” and my hypothetical example above is not meant to deny this. The point of introducing it is simply to stress that saying that a moral agent *forfeits* all rights and standing as a human being is quite different from saying that someone does not qualify as a moral agent, responsible for his or her conduct. Second, because of the extraordinary difficulty of fully understanding the psychology of Hitler, Attila the Hun, Jeffrey Dahmer, and the like, these extreme cases are not good test cases for a *general policy* about what rights criminals and other moral offenders forfeit. So, for now, let us concentrate on more easily intelligible cases, admitting that more may need to be said about cases in which the evil —or madness —is apparently so extreme as to defy understanding.

From the Kantian perspective, there are several possible ways of arguing that no one should be seen as having totally forfeited all respect as a human being. Our considerable ignorance of the deep motives and character of offenders is significant. Also, since lawful conduct is no guarantee of moral attitudes, we are to a considerable extent ignorant of the *comparative* moral worth of overt offenders and law-abiding citizens. Again, since we cannot help risking that we will misjudge people, we need to consider

whether it is better to err one way rather than the other. Is it not better to err by giving offenders more respect than they are due than to err by denying offenders respect that is due? Can any of us with genuine moral humility, rooted in honest scrutiny of our own characters and motives, confidently deny all force to the thought “There, but for circumstance (God’s grace, luck, or whatever), go I?” Are we willing to live in a world where everyone judges us, up to the point of utter contempt, by the loose standards of evidence needed for anyone to reach a verdict on another’s ultimate moral deserts? Further, would not treating criminals and other offenders with utter contempt, as Kant suggests, cast a shadow of dishonor on all human beings? After all, by hypothesis, if culpable, those we condemn are “responsible” moral agents, and so they retain at least some minimum responsiveness to moral concerns. Moreover, their failings, broadly speaking, are similar to ours in kind even if not in degree.

The Kantian framework, as presented here, suggests another line of argument. This relies more heavily on empirical assumptions than Kant would have liked, but nonetheless it seems relevant. If we address the issue of forfeit from within the Kantian framework, it boils down to whether appropriately situated “legislators” of (derivative) moral standards would cancel the presumed obligation to respect all human beings for the special case of heinous crimes and moral offenses. Since this is a question about real, quite imperfect human circumstances, it requires a shift from ideal to nonideal theory and hence some appropriate adjustments in how we conceive the Kantian moral deliberators addressing the issue.

Let me pause briefly to explain. In ideal theory we ask, What principles would moral legislators make under the assumptions that the legislators will agree and that each will accept and follow their joint decisions? But the principles that would be reasonable if we could assume universal conscientious compliance may be quite unreasonable, even disastrous, if applied to the real world,

where noncompliance is frequent and compliance must often be forced by threat of punishment. This does not mean that ideal theory is useless. It is often helpful to think *first*, What would be the ideal principles, that is, the principles most reasonable to adopt *if* all would conscientiously follow them? This is helpful, however, only so long as we are willing to think again, more realistically, about the differences between that ideal world and ours. Then the issue becomes, How must those ideal rules be modified to accommodate the facts of the actual world—for example, the facts that even the most conscientious people commonly disagree about moral principles and that the less conscientious often violate even their own principles? If we accept the legislative model, the strategy for addressing such issues is to consider what modifications ideal legislators would make in their principles if they knew they were legislating for people who are quite imperfect in specified ways.

Consider, for example, the problem raised by *moral disagreement*. In the most abstractly conceived Kantian moral legislature, “the kingdom of ends,” individual differences among members are discounted and so no disagreements are anticipated. But how are we to apply the ideal to our circumstances, where, even with the best efforts to eliminate bias, disagreements persist? The best move toward a solution, I suggest, would be to adjust the Kantian framework as follows. As more ideal moral legislators presumably would recommend *for moral deliberation in our imperfect world* where moral disagreements are pervasive, our best possible human deliberators should (1) acknowledge their liability to disagreement while continuing to seek as broadly based and well grounded agreement as possible. To this end, they would also (2) prescribe a variety of strategies to reduce deep disagreements, such as encouraging cross-cultural understanding, broadening the scope of moral dialogues, looking for common values beneath superficial differences, accepting mediating procedures when substantive disagreement proves unresolvable, and so on. Then, aware that these

strategies are not always successful, they would (3) recommend both *moral humility* and *conscientiousness*, as the best attitudes in a world where moral certainty and universal agreement are impossible. By this I mean that when moral disagreements persist, despite our best efforts to reduce them, then the best we can do is to admit our fallibility,³¹ and then, each of us, act on the principles that we honestly judge to be *the most plausible candidates* for being justifiable to all. With this amendment, reflections from ideal theory can help to guide *conscientious* personal choice even though they offer no assurance of moral “*truth*.”³²

Now to return to the issue of forfeit, we need to consider how such moral deliberators would modify ideal principles if deciding standards for a world (like ours) that is imperfect in another important respect besides its liability to moral disagreement—namely, even when there is agreement on what is morally required, *non-compliance is frequent and coercion is necessary*. In particular, would they withdraw the presumption that everyone should be respected as a human being?

Recall that our hypothetical moral deliberators are now concerned to settle on rules for an imperfect world, like ours, in which even conscientious people have lapses and no one is completely immune from corruption. Although character and conduct are not entirely matters of luck, they know that, in our imperfect world, luck provides very unequal opportunities, temptations, and social pressures. Even if, as relatively comfortable and educated folk, they are fairly confident that they, and their loved ones, will never commit the most serious crimes, they know that other less fortunate or more impulsive people will do so despite the fact that they

³¹ Strictly, one should admit not only fallibility (i.e., that one may be in error about what is the best candidate for justifiability to all), but also that there may be no fact of the matter about which of several candidates is better.

³² By moral “truth” within the framework considered here we must mean what all human beings, as ideal co-legislators, from the moral point of view would agree on. Conscientiousness requires merely trying one’s best to think issues through from that point of view, in consultation with others, and acting on the outcome.

are not beyond redemption or utterly lacking in concern for others. They know too that the children and partners loved by many respectable people will turn to crime, for reasons we cannot fully understand. Their confidence that they themselves, and their own children and loved ones, will never turn out like this may not be as justified as they think. In any case this special feature of their own case is more relevant to their private wishes than to what they should approve as general moral policy.

Another important fact that they must keep in mind is that all systems for imposing punishment and moral sanctions are subject to error, both unintended mistakes and deliberate abuses. Adding this to the previous considerations, the result is that the moral deliberators should be aware that a policy allowing that serious offenders forfeit all respect would, over time, authorize utterly contemptuous treatment for some innocent people, many of mixed character, some who now fully intend to be law-abiding, and many loved by them.

Before a policy is settled, moral deliberation should also include vivid representation of what utterly contemptuous treatment can amount to. First, there are many practices actually employed in prisons today: for example, deemphasizing individuality by giving prisoners generic haircuts, uniforms, cells, and identification tags; moving them by physical force whether needed or not; using basic comfort and opportunities for physical exercise, mental stimulation, and companionship as special “treats” to manipulate behavior; ignoring prison rapes and beatings; and unrestrained verbal abuse from guards. Next, we must recall the many contemptuous forms of punishment employed in various places throughout history: physical beatings and burnings, sleep deprivation, prolonged solitary confinement, “silent treatment,” exiling, ostracizing, public humiliation by branding, tarring and feathering, coerced false confessions, “brainwashing,” drawing and quartering, public display of heads on pikes, refusal of burial, expunging names from records, and blacklisting heirs. More informal expressions of con-

tempt should also not be forgotten: cursing, spitting, mocking, gratuitous denial of innocent wishes, and other efforts to express disdain (treating someone “like dirt,” “like a worm,” or “like garbage”). Especially when based on the thought that the guilty person has *forfeited* all moral standing, these punishments and symbolic humiliations are ones that we are naturally very reluctant to risk incurring or imposing on anyone about whom we care. This is not only because we hate pain but because we could hardly bear the utter contempt these practices express, which is far more, and worse, than mere retribution, vengeance, indignation, and angry rebuke. It represents the will of others, collectively, to deny any remaining worth to our existence, and it would be a rare person who could maintain his or her self-respect, or even self-love, when forced to confront that message.

Recall, too, that those who accept the Kantian framework are not self-centered or “mutually disinterested,” like Rawls’s “original position” members. They are committed to regarding humanity in each person as an end in itself, and at least formal requirements of respect for persons as co-legislators of moral standards are implicit in the basic framework for deliberation. Also, with some minimal empirical assumptions, we can argue *from* the Kantian framework *to* reasonable presumptions of further (substantive) respect, as we did above. Similar argument would support *prima facie* requirements of mutual aid and promoting the happiness of others, since no appropriately impartial legislator would deny that meeting vital needs and promoting happiness are good to do at least *when there is no relevant reason not to*.

Given all this, it seems incredible to suppose that all Kantian deliberators would agree that criminals and other moral offenders can altogether forfeit respect and that, therefore, we may treat them with utter contempt. There is good reason to suppose that to be subjected to such contempt is too awful to risk, not only from an individual’s point of view but from that of any representative person reflecting on general policies in advance of involvement

in particular cases. They would not want to risk being treated with utter contempt; nor would they want to risk this for anyone else because, by hypothesis, they care (to some degree) about everyone.

This conclusion needs to be qualified, however. All have *good reasons* not to accept a policy that risks utterly contemptuous treatment for them or anyone they care for; but, for argument's sake, we must concede that there could be *overriding reasons*, warranting the risk. Our conclusion that respect cannot be forfeited seems clear, then, provided one further condition can be met. This remaining condition is that the attitude of not permitting respect to be forfeited is possible for us and is compatible with our other responsibilities, in particular, to protect ourselves, to maintain just punishment, and to speak out forcefully against moral atrocities. Do we need to treat serious offenders with utter contempt in order to protect ourselves, to give them their just deserts, or to express our reasonable outrage? In the next, and final, section, I suggest that, to the contrary, we can continue to respect offenders as human beings without sacrificing any of these concerns.

6. *The Possibility of Respectful Self-protection, Punishment, and Moral Censure*

My claim in this final section is the following. The proviso we left open in the argument above is satisfied because we can treat everyone with basic human respect and still meet our other responsibilities. Thus, our presumption that all moral agents should be respected as human beings should stand even for perpetrators of serious crimes and moral offenses. Even they should not be seen as forfeiting all respect.

First, is self-protection compatible with respect? Many of us would agree with Kant that, properly constrained, self-protection is a right and a responsibility. We may resist unlawful threats with force, and we should not let anyone "walk all over us." Measured, proportional responses to unwarranted threats, however, are not contemptuous of the attacker. Even lethal force in

self-defense is permitted by traditional moral standards, widely agreed to be justifiable to virtually all reasonable persons. Nor do we need to return mockery and degrading insults to those who hurl them at us, for there are more effective ways to combat verbal abuse. A policy of trusting the demonstrably untrustworthy is not a requirement of respect, but merely foolishness. Tolerating others' abuse and contempt is not a way of respecting them, or oneself; it only smooths the way for continuing maltreatment. Respectful self-protection leaves the door open for negotiation and reconciliation, when possible, but it does not require dropping one's guard prematurely.

Even when self-protection warrants lethal force against an aggressor, readiness to kill *when absolutely necessary* need not express the *contemptuous attitude* that the aggressor has forfeited all considerations as a human being. The respectful self-defender would *prefer*, if possible, that aggressors retreat peacefully, that they not suffer permanent pain and humiliation, and that ultimately they would rejoin the law-abiding community and thrive in their legitimate concerns. Utter contempt shows in the use of unnecessary force, disregard for peaceful options, and, generally, regarding unjust aggressors as nothing but obstacles to be eliminated.

Second, is basic respect compatible with reasonable effective and just punishment? What is needed are public systems that protect legitimate interests, discourage further violations of reasonable laws, and yet also respect everyone, including criminals, as human beings. Granted, our own coercive social systems fall short, but that does not mean that effective systems of protection, deterrence, and punishment must necessarily deny basic respect to offenders. Surely neither the draconian methods of punishment nor the attitudes of utter contempt reviewed in the last section are necessary; and history does not record that they have been remarkably effective.

In any decent social order with a proper respect for its members, there will need to be fair, public rules designed to ensure the

members a secure life with opportunities to pursue what they find valuable, provided the pursuits are compatible with others' right to similar pursuits. Universal respect does not require *tolerance* of willful violations of the rights of others. In principle, and approximately in practice, a society can respect all the members by maintaining laws and other social norms, guaranteeing, to all who will cooperate, security and opportunities that would be impossible without rule-governed mutual constraints. By limiting surveillance and the constant presence of armed guards, the members trust each other, conditionally, to comply with the laws from a conscientious regard for what they can see as a fair basis for cooperation. Even this (cautious) trust is a form of respect. Once the trust has been breached, we can show basic respect by providing fair trial, access to legal defense, consideration of mitigating circumstances, avenues of appeal, respectful demeanor and speech in legal processes, abolition of degrading forms of punishment, resources to encourage reform, appropriate criteria for parole, and prison conditions that do not add gratuitous degradation to just punishment. To ensure *respectful just punishment* we need reforms in both our practices and our attitudes, but neither experience nor philosophical argument has shown that this is an unattainable goal.

Third, similar considerations apply when we turn to moral censure, outside the legal system. Just as some systems of punishment are disrespectful and others are not, moral blame and disapproval can be respectful or not. There are many ways these can be disrespectful. For example, an unwarranted, disrespectful superiority is displayed when we self-righteously blame others for overt offenses no worse than our private ones. Again, we show disrespect when we make oral accusations based on flimsy evidence, class stereotyping, and no genuine effort to understand. Also, manipulative blame, meant merely to condition subjects to associate unwanted behaviors with bad feelings, ignores the reason and judgment of those who are blamed, in effect denying their moral agency. It is how we train pigeons and rats that we regard as in-

capable of responsible choice. Finally, hurling epithets at someone in contempt, merely to vent one's hostility, to cause pain, or to please a sympathetic crowd, fails to address the offender as a person because there is no willingness to hear a response.

We are not forced to choose between disrespectful blame and cold, contemptuous dismissal because *respectful moral accusation, argument, and censure* are possible. Moral blame, properly conceived, is a judgment addressed to someone presumed capable of hearing it as such and responding appropriately. Blame is not merely a pain inflicted to deter future misconduct by inducing an expectation that similar pains will recur when misconduct recurs. The most painful and disturbing moral censure, in fact, presupposes that the person blamed is "one of us," guilty of betrayal of shared commitments and capable of feeling the bite of the censure just because he or she has internalized moral ideas of mutual respect under which he or she stands accused. To express moral disapproval is all the more appropriate when the accuser is not a moralistic busybody, quick to judge, but is the very person the offender has most disrespected by his or her conduct. Judicious moral blame is a judgment that itself respects the accused as a moral agent, capable of hearing and heeding the relevant moral point. Although notoriously those of us in glass houses should be reluctant to use it, moral blame can be loud, vehement, and pointed while at the same time respectfully addressing the conscience of the accused.

I hasten to add that my remarks here are not meant to encourage a moralistic, judgmental attitude, for this too is a serious vice that mutually respectful people have many reasons to avoid and discourage.³³ My point is just that since *respectful blame* is an option in response to extreme immorality, one cannot argue that

³³ In fact in my previous writings I have so emphasized the merits of not being judgmental, rather than the possibility of respectful moral judgment and censure, that I fear this may have encouraged the suspicion that Kantian respect is incompatible with vigorous moral blame. My last remarks are meant, in part, to correct that impression.

all respect is forfeited by serious moral offenders because to think otherwise would be to condone their offenses. Since just and respectful punishment and moral censure are available to express appropriate moral attitudes and protect legitimate interests, there is no good reason to set aside our initial presumption that all human beings have dignity, a respect-worthy status that need not be earned and cannot be forfeited.

This conclusion is pertinent to our initial concerns, in the first lecture, with moral debates on university campuses. For example, both sides in disputes about sexism and racism are usually convinced that their stand is conscientious and correct. No one admits to being either a bigot or an unfair accuser of bigotry; and so the problem has more to do with “erring conscience” and moral insensitivity than with willful immorality. Here, more than ever, there is a need and an opportunity for mutually respectful moral discussion because, unlike in criminal cases, typically both sides are already publicly committed to being conscientious in their judgments. Moreover, the confrontations take place within universities, which are institutions, more than any other, opposed to dogmatism, empty rhetoric, and manipulation of opinion and committed, instead, to listening to evidence, accepting criticism, and understanding alternative points of view. That is the theory, anyway; and mutually respectful moral debate should be part of the practice.