

1-1-2006

# Globalization and Cosmopolitanism: Tracing a Kantian Trajectory to Peace

Philip J. Rossi

Marquette University, [philip.rossi@marquette.edu](mailto:philip.rossi@marquette.edu)

---

Published version. "Globalization and Cosmopolitanism: Tracing a Kantian Trajectory to Peace" in *In Quest of Peace: Indian Culture Shows the Path*. Eds. Intaj Malek, Sunanda Shastri, and Yajneshwar Shastri. Delhi, India: Bharatiya Kala Prakashan, 2006: 162-174. [Publisher Link](#). © 2006 Bharatiya Kala Prakashan. Used with permission.

## GLOBALIZATION AND COSMOPOLITANISM : TRACING A KANTIAN TRAJECTORY TO PEACE

—Philip Rossi, SJ

My paper argues that the concepts of 'cosmopolitanism' and 'cosmopolitan right' that Immanuel Kant enunciates in a number of his writings ('Theory and Practice,' 'Toward Perpetual Peace,' and *The Metaphysics of Morals*) provide a particularly useful lens through which to examine the dynamics of globalization for their effectiveness in promoting an international order capable of securing a just and stable world peace. Kant's own expositions of this concept, though all brief and schematic, are also remarkably prescient in attending to the linkages among commerce, political order and culture that today play important roles in the multi-level phenomenon of globalization. My argument will focus on the element of these concepts that is most salient for a moral analysis of globalization: Cosmopolitanism as *the imaginative horizon for a moral hope* that we are able to make the processes of globalization function effectively for establishing conditions conducive to a just and stable world peace.

**I. Cosmopolitanism: Social Framework for Human Action in History**—The political, social, and cultural circumstances of Kant's eighteenth-century world were considerably different from the ones that face humanity at the outset of the twenty-first century.<sup>1</sup> Kant's Europe was ordered by monarchy and mercantilism, a world in which class and gender were taken for granted as appropriate determinants for life prospects. It was a Europe already on a journey away from a culture of unquestioned religious faith, even as the institutionalized forms of Christianity and popular religiosity both continued to have important social, cultural, and political functions. It was a Europe at the height of colonial claim upon the Americas, moving to expand its influence in Asia and poised to bring Africa under the sway of empire. It was a Europe at the brink of an explosion of technological advances that would make the term 'revolution' as apt for the changes effected on ordinary life as it was for the changes effected in political institutions in the wake of the

War of Independence in British North America and the overthrow of the French monarchy.

Within Kant's own particular context as a citizen-subject of the Prussian monarchy, he was considered-and, indeed, considered himself-an advocate of "enlightenment"-i.e., of the principles that eventually would enable reason properly to govern the full range of human social dynamics in culture and political life. Though during Kant's own lifetime there were some who considered him a dangerous radical in view of his continuing sympathy for the ideals of the French Revolution, he cast his own articulation of how principles of enlightenment apply to concrete human social dynamics in the language of reform rather than of revolution.<sup>2</sup> He envisioned it as reform set in motion from above, by the sovereign ruler, rather than from below, by the general populace-though the segment of the populace that is a "learned public" would play an important role in providing the conditions that enable reform to take proper effect (*TP*, 8: 298-300/298-99, 304/302; *MdS*, 6: 339-341/480-81; *SF*, 7: 89/305; 92-93/307-308)<sup>3</sup>. When viewed from the perspective of later history-especially one that takes into account not only the views Kant actually expressed but also how those views were then interpreted in subsequent debates about social and political order-Kant has been seen as an important figure in the development of liberal political thinking. Even though Kant advocated a number of concrete practices that seem at odds with political liberalism in many of its influential twentieth-century forms, he has been enshrined in the pantheon of liberal thinkers in view of the central role that he gives to human freedom, most prominently through his introduction of the concept of the moral autonomy of each human person.<sup>4</sup>

Kant's notion of a "cosmopolitan perspective" is one of the concrete ways in which he articulates a *social* authority for reason within his own late 18th century context.<sup>5</sup> Though Kant's discussions of such a cosmopolitan perspective comprise a heterogeneous set of texts and touch on a variety of topics, a feature common to many of these texts is the referencing of a cosmopolitan perspective to an historical trajectory which has as its goal the attainment of *common* human destiny: e. g., in *IAG* (1784), the "cosmopolitan state" is "the perfect civic union of the human species" which is "nature's supreme objective" (8: 28-29/38); the discussion of cosmopolitanism in *CJ* (1790) occurs in §83, "On the Ultimate Purpose that Nature Has as a Teleological System"; similarly, the discussion in *TP* (1793) is embedded in a discussion in which Kant affirms the practical necessity of presuming the continuing moral progress of humanity. In *AP* (1798) the establishment of a cosmopolitan society is envisioned in terms of "a regulative principle, [directing us] to pursue this diligently as the destiny of the human race" (7: 331/191). Significantly, the passages in which Kant does *not* explicitly associate what is cosmopolitan with an historical trajectory toward human destiny are more narrowly concerned with that aspect of a cosmopolitan perspective that can be articulated as (coercively) enforceable articles of international law: rights of hospitality and commerce (*MdS*, *EF*). At the end of my discussion I will suggest how even this more narrowly construed notion of cosmopolitan right has a bearing upon the project of working toward international peace that Kant sees as a necessary step in the attainment of the common destiny of humankind.

For Kant, then, having a cosmopolitan perspective in its largest sense means taking the viewpoint of a “world-citizen” upon the historical and cultural dynamics of human social and political interaction as it moves on a trajectory aimed at the destiny of the human race. This cosmopolitan perspective functions, moreover, as a framework from which an answer—though admittedly not a full answer—can be made to the question which Kant identifies as “simultaneously practical and theoretical” (A 805/B 833): “For what may I hope?” From a cosmopolitan perspective one may specifically hope for that which Kant proposes as a necessary intermediate stage for humanity’s reaching its appropriate moral destiny. This intermediate stage is the establishment of a federation or league of nations which will provide the conditions for perpetual peace and thus for the eventual full attainment of the highest good as a social goal for the human species. A cosmopolitan perspective is not a viewpoint that someone can just casually take up. It is a viewpoint to which one must be educated. A major reason for this is there are elements in the dynamics of our human moral make-up that stand in tension with the universal, inclusive and long-range characteristics that distinguish this outlook as “cosmopolitan.” Chief among these tense elements is what Kant terms our “unsociable sociability” which he describes as our “propensity to enter into society, bound together with a mutual opposition which constantly threatens to break up the society” (IAG 8: 20/15). Book Three of *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason* begins with what may very well be Kant’s most eloquent account of the unsocial sociability under which humanity must work out its moral destiny. It is of no little significance that the discussion of an “ethical commonwealth”—Kant’s term for the highest good as a social goal—in Division One of this work concludes with two explicit references to concerns which inform Kant’s account of a cosmopolitan perspective: First, in the long footnote to the next to last paragraph, Kant explicitly compares the problem facing the achievement of “this end of unity of the pure religion of reason” to the problem facing the achievement of a [single] cosmopolitan state (*Rel*, 6: 123 footnote/152-53); and second, in the final paragraph, Kant affirms the establishment of an ethical commonwealth as that which brings with it an assurance of perpetual peace to the world (*Rel* 6: 124/153).

These passages suggest a number of lines of connection which can be drawn through *Religion* and the essays of the 1790s and 1780s in which Kant tries to articulate a cosmopolitan perspective. This should not be too surprising in view of the fact that Kant wrote *Religion* and some of the key essays articulating a cosmopolitan perspective—the ones on theory and practice, perpetual peace, and human moral progress—within the same four year time-frame (1792-95). The lines of connection most pertinent to Kant’s efforts here to articulate concrete forms for the highest human social good, moreover, run back to the three questions Kant formulates as a *précis* of the critical project (A 805/B 833). In conjunction with one another, the ethical commonwealth and a cosmopolitan viewpoint each provide elements of a framework that enables moral agents to take their individual answers (i. e., the fidelity of the conduct of their moral lives to the self-governance of reason) to the second question:

What ought *I* do?

to have an effective bearing on the human destiny that is the outcome of the course of history. That destiny provides a common and collective human answer to the third question:

For what may *we* hope?

Both these answers can be properly framed, however, only within the context of a critically validated answer to the first question:

What can I know?

that delimits the proper range of claims that issue from the theoretical and the practical uses of reason. All three answers together constitute a prelude to a fourth, anthropological question that Kant makes explicit in his lectures on logic:

What is humanity?<sup>6</sup>

This final question, there is good reason to believe, is the controlling question of Kant's entire philosophical career—and, of course, is itself one way of articulating the project of resolving the issue of the relationship between nature and freedom. For Kant, both the question and its answer lie precisely in the fact that humanity is itself the juncture that unites nature and freedom even while preserving their irreducible difference.<sup>7</sup>

Placed in this context, the notion of a cosmopolitan perspective is an articulation of what Kant sees as the appropriate human response to the status of our species as the unique juncture of nature and freedom. There is, on the one hand, the response that arises when we consider the course of human history from the side of the theoretical use of our reason. Nature, which has already thrust upon us the necessity of leaving the juridical state of nature to become citizens of a particular state, now also thrusts upon us—by virtue of the circumstances of our human existence as finite, needy beings on a planet of finite resources—the necessity of taking the perspective of “world citizen.” Since nature gives us no choice but to live as social beings, not only within the confines of a single nation, but also as members of an assemblage of nations sharing one planet, we must learn to take a perspective that looks out from and upon the whole human world. Viewed in terms of the exigencies of nature, our human destiny—if there be a common one—can only be along whatever path nature carries us.

The cosmopolitan perspective, however, is not simply the outcome of the workings of nature. In fact, the workings of nature can provide us only with the kind of cosmopolitan perspective that arises for those who share a vantage point provided by our common destiny of the graveyard—an image that Kant uses with effective irony at the start of “*Toward Perpetual Peace*.” If we wait for the workings of nature to bring about a social union that will make possible a common human destiny, we will find that destiny only in the death that is our common lot as mortals. Indeed, if we wait for nature to bring about the social union that its workings make appropriate for us as the juncture of nature and freedom, we may find ourselves cooperating in the attainment of that common fate by

inflicting death on one another: Our unsociable sociability remains unregenerate, enabling war as the final and inextirpable social form of radical evil.

In contrast to this, there is the cosmopolitan perspective that can and must be framed from the vantage point of reason's practical use. This functions to provide a form of comprehensive intelligibility to a matter—the trajectory of the whole course of human history—on which reason's theoretical use entangles itself and us in conflicts that are not merely dialectical but all too real. Only when formed from the workings of the practical use of reason can a cosmopolitan perspective provide us with a critically validated response to the question about the outcome of human history. Such a critically validated response is one which poses this question in terms of its moral intelligibility: What *ought we* do so that our being carried in history wherever nature takes us comports properly with the unique character of our human status as the juncture of nature and freedom?

When the question is posed this way, the response then turns on the possibility that human beings can and ought mutually to take moral responsibility with one another for the outcome of history. *A cosmopolitan perspective is thus the critically validated social framework from which one may take human action (including one's own) to have effective bearing upon the outcome of human history.* We can effectively act as "world citizens" only on the basis of an uncoerced mutual recognition of one another *as agents of human destiny for one another.* This suggests that it is only to the extent that we place our action in the framework of a shared hope for a human destiny which we work out in mutual recognition of one another's freedom that we will be justified in taking our human destiny to move along a trajectory which we impart to it.

**II. Cosmopolitanism and Globalization.** "Globalization" is a term that can be used to designate a wide range of phenomena affecting human lives and culture in the contemporary world and is thus open to a wide range of analyses and construals. As shorthand for the processes, practices and technologies that have made it possible for human beings to communicate instantaneously with one another at any time and from almost any place, globalization of this kind might immediately seem to be a development that comports well with Kant's notion of a cosmopolitan perspective and one that would make possible a world-wide extension of the public use of reason. We have every reason to think that Kant would have welcomed the still growing repertoire of electronic technology that enables human beings to transact their business, collaborate in scientific research, share advances in knowledge, and expand and deepen their acquaintance with the rich array of human life practices and culture. At the same time, we have every reason also to think that Kant would have been alert to the manner in which any of the activities and practices we might group under the term globalization are subject to the human dynamic that he terms unsociable sociability and could thus be employed in service of the self-corruption of the social self-governance of reason.<sup>8</sup> Like any other human dynamic, globalization is susceptible to the subtle self-serving inversion of moral maxims that Kant terms radical evil. Kant would further insist, I believe, that an appropriate critical understanding of the natural and social dynamics at work in globalization must show how

the exercise of reason in its practical use puts them in service of humanity's vocation as the juncture of nature and freedom, i.e., how both the workings of nature harnessed in service of globalization and our human engagement in the direction of that enterprise foster the attainment of the social destiny of our humanity.

Certain dynamics at work in globalization can thus be read in continuity with Kant's cosmopolitanism, as a further step on a trajectory in which recognition of mutual economic interdependence will play a central role in bringing about a world political order that will more effectively reduce the risk of armed conflict among its member states. Placed in the grid of meanings and valuations to which Kant's own moral philosophy made a significant contribution, the dynamics of globalization can help to effect a deeper recognition of a common humanity and to make possible wider acknowledgment of a broad range of rights that pertain to each and every person simply in virtue of being human. On this reading globalization involves significant opportunities for deepening and widening of the application of universal moral principles of justice and fairness, while at the same time giving due recognition to the rich array of human cultural differences.

This cosmopolitan way of reading the dynamics of globalization, however, is not the only one. In fact, it is articulated from a grid of meanings and valuations that stands radically challenged by other dynamics that, from a different grid of meanings and valuations, also seem to be at work in the processes of globalization. From this other grid, globalization provides a horizon, more adequate than what the abstract Enlightenment universality of cosmopolitanism could offer, for recognizing and highlighting, not the commonality and universality connecting human beings to one another, but the particularity that makes each human being and set of human circumstances unique. On this reading, the import of globalization lies in the new possibilities it can provide for the full articulation of human uniqueness and particularity: The establishment of new forms through which human beings can make links with one another and have direct access to the output of the full range of human knowledge, labor and creativity will make possible a more complete expression of the uniqueness of each individual or each group within an ever more closely linked web of connections.

These two readings of globalization are not, of course, the only ones. There are other conceptual and imaginative grids that can be applied from the perspectives of economics, anthropology, politics, religion, cultural studies, communications, ecology—indeed from almost every of form of human inquiry—precisely because the effects of globalization have the potential for affecting every area of human life and affecting it “deep down.” I have outlined these two particular readings of globalization to bring to the fore two quite different possibilities emerging from the process of globalization that have an important bearing on construing our human connectedness and our human differences. One sees globalization as providing new possibilities for deepening affirmations of human connectedness; the other sees it making possible a more radical and complete affirmation of human differences.

These possibilities are not entirely new. Embedded within them are the polarities of

our unsociable sociability—and these polarities are, I suspect, not resolvable as simply or directly as a construct that tries to directly harmonize them, such as that of “the global village,” might suggest. Even as globalization makes it possible for human beings to forge new and more complex links among themselves, to see more clearly the range of already existent connections that tie human activities to one another and to the processes of nature, and to allow awareness of the possibilities of interconnection to feed back into the shaping of daily practice, it also allows us to construe the most basic form of human connections to construct increasingly amenable to determination by the exercise of arbitrary human choice. Even as globalization expands the possibilities for acknowledging our likenesses and their power to draw us together, it also enables us to construe them in ways that allow us to reserve a “right” to withdraw from the claims they place upon us. In each case, globalization, as a form of the dynamic of unsociable sociability, provides new possibilities for exhibiting the exception made in one’s own individual (or group) favor that lies at the heart of radical evil.<sup>9</sup>

The way that the dynamics of connectedness and difference play out in the processes of globalization are themselves affected by the particular economic, cultural, and historical circumstances in which the organizational and technological conditions which make globalization possible have emerged. Abstracted from those circumstances, globalization alone does not pose any more-or less—of a threat to the social fabric of our human lives than predecessor movements (e.g., industrialization) that have had long range impact upon human social organization and dynamics. Like those predecessor movements, the results are likely to involve both loss and gain—with the particular forms of loss and gain emerging from the larger matrix of human activity of which globalization now plays a part.

Within the context of globalization, I would argue that Kant’s notion of a cosmopolitan perspective can function as an imaginative “horizon” in which to place these dynamics of connectedness and difference. It is a horizon from which we are invited to imagine not merely the *actual* social circumstances in which human beings interact with one another but also the social circumstances *we can both envision as possible and are willing to make actual* through the exercise of moral freedom. A cosmopolitan perspective thus functions to help us construe some of the concrete human possibilities that can come about only in virtue of our adopting what Kant calls “hope” as a focus for our moral efforts. Kantian hope is constituted by our *willingness to imagine that what we ought to make possible* for one another through the mutual exercise of our freedom *is precisely what we can make possible*. This means that hope is more than a mere envisioning of possibilities. It is an envisioning of possibilities that enables us to give our action a trajectory *that it would not have taken in the absence of that hope*.

One measure of the cultural distance that we have traveled in the two centuries that separate us from Kant is that a strong case could be made for the proposition that Kant himself framed a far more robust and confident answer to the question of our human destiny—particularly with respect to humanity as a species—than much of our contemporary



culture would allow us to do. Even as the culture of globalization offers a tantalizing horizon for the fulfillment of hopes for an individual's immediate life prospects, those same dynamics can just as readily induce forgetfulness of the need for—let alone the possibility of—a common horizon of hope for the humanity connecting us all. The challenge is not so much that the implicit answer to the question “For what may we hope?” that arises from the contemporary cultural dynamics of immediacy is likely to be “Not much.” It is rather that the possibility of raising the question of hope for our common humanity *does not even occur*. In place of the anxiety and despair that has lurked at the edges of a declining modernity, a culture of post-modernity seems far more likely to offer a shrug of indifference to concerns about the prospects of humanity. Despair is a possibility only when hope matters—and there are dynamics at work in the emergent global culture that suggest that, indeed, it doesn't.

In this context, Kant's remarks at the conclusion of the *Rechtslehre* are particularly instructive:

...What is incumbent on us as a duty is rather to act in conformity with the idea of that end [i.e., perpetual peace as the “highest political good”] even if there is not the slightest theoretical likelihood that it can be realized, as long as its impossibility cannot be demonstrated either.

Now morally practical reason pronounces in us its irresistible veto: *there is to be no war*, neither war between you and me in the state of nature nor war between us as states...for war is not the way in which everyone should seek his rights. So the question is no longer whether perpetual peace is something real or a fiction, and whether we are not deceiving ourselves in our theoretical judgments when we assume that it is real. Instead, we must act as if it is something real, though perhaps it is not; we must work toward establishing perpetual peace and the kind of constitution that seems to us most conducive to it (say, a republicanism of all states, together and separately) in order to bring about perpetual peace...And even if the complete realization of this objective always remains a pious wish, still we are certainly not deceiving ourselves in adopting the maxim of working incessantly toward it (*MdS*, 6: 354-55/491).

As Kant is quite clearly aware, the theoretical “non-impossibility” that the workings of nature could bring about the conditions for perpetual peace among nations seems hardly sufficient to constitute grounds for bringing us to work for it. Indeed, the perpetual peace that nature brings is just as likely to be that of the graveyard as that of an international political order. All that such theoretical non-impossibility supplies is space in which the full significance of the exercise of our human freedom toward the goal of perpetual peace becomes evident. Perpetual peace will not come in the absence of human willingness to hope for it *precisely in a way that construes it as goal that we are able to effect*. It will not come about until and unless we are willing to envision that it will come about precisely in virtue of the exercise of our freedom. In the absence of such hope, perpetual peace becomes in fact impossible—not because it is of itself impossible but because we have denied *that its possibility is something we can effect through our human freedom*.

This Kantian focus on hope with respect to the possibility of perpetual peace indicates something quite ironic about the denial of the social authority of reason that has arisen from our own contemporary cultural context known as the "post-modern." This denial is not about what the exercise of our reason authorizes us to *think* about our social relationships, but it is more a denial of what the exercise of our reason authorizes us to *imagine* and to *will* about those relationships. The denial that reason has social authority is equivalently a claim that we can neither imagine nor will the circumstances under which human beings could freely and mutually establish a fully inclusive, universal, non-coercive set of social relationships for the mutual exercise of their freedom. From Kant's perspective, reason authorizes us to ask: What is the basis for such a denial? What *requires* us to take such relationships as lying *beyond our power to effect*? Are we *inevitably* bound by past human failures to establish and successfully foster such relationships? If we rule them out as beyond our powers, of course we will be unwilling to bring them about; but if we enlarge our imagination to encompass them as relationships that we have the power to effect, then we indeed make it possible for us to work toward making them actual. As in the case of perpetual peace, the fundamental denial is of the possibility of hope-peace is not in itself impossible; *we make it impossible* by denying that we can effect it through the exercise of our human freedom.

Kant's proposal for perpetual peace may be of use to us not so much for the details it provides for an international federation of nations but for the way in which it portrays perpetual peace as an object of hope that is necessary for providing a certain trajectory to the determination of actions that we undertake in concert with one another. As long as we keep it in view as an object of our hope, perpetual peace among nations becomes possible. *It is seen as possible precisely as an outcome of human actions taken, in view of this hope, to establish an international political order.* In the absence of such hope, actions to establish an international order to make perpetual peace possible will not be taken, with the result that the only perpetual peace that can be brought into being is that of the graveyard.

The hope that reason requires us to have for perpetual peace is, of course, one that Kant places in the context of the larger set of circumstances in which we find ourselves as and at the juncture of nature and freedom. The workings of nature have a role to play in the attainment of the human destiny that we must work out in view of our unique status in the cosmos. Kant thus indicates in a variety of places that the attainment of our human destiny as the juncture of nature and freedom—including important stages on the way, such as perpetual peace—is an outcome of causal processes by which nature (or, as he will sometimes call it, "providence") does often make us do unwittingly and unwillingly what we willingly ought to do—but in fact do not. Nature need not wait for the exercise of human freedom to effect conditions conducive to the attainment of human destiny. Nature even utilizes our "unsociable sociability" to spur us to the development of the culture and the civil order that provide external conditions conducive to attainment of our human moral destiny (e. g., *IAG*, 8: 24-26/34-6; *CJ*, 5: §83, 429-434/297-301; *TP*, 8: 310-13/307-309; *AP*, 7: 322-25/183-86; 328-31/188-91).

Yet even as he affirms the role of nature, Kant is equally insistent that the attainment of human moral destiny is something the use of our reason demands of us. Bringing that destiny about—including perpetual peace as a stage on the way—finally rests upon what human beings concretely do (e. g., *TP*, 8: 312-13/308-9; *EF*, 8: 355-57/327-28, 368/336-37; *MdS*, 6: 354-55/490-92). Nature can spur us unwittingly and unwillingly only so far along the path to perpetual peace and our moral destiny: The moral demand which reason places on the formation of our action requires that we not take the attainment of perpetual peace or of the moral destiny of the human species as a foregone conclusion of the dynamics of nature. It is rather a task whose final shape and completion depend upon the properly-ordered actions of human beings—and the ordering of such actions is a function of the hope that such human action will be effective in the attainment of these objects of hope. As a result, the particular human social, cultural and political dynamics over which human beings can exercise control in accord with the self-governance of reason will have a decisive impact upon the trajectory along which humanity moves toward the attainment of a goal such as perpetual peace.

It may be easy to overlook the fact that Kant places the project of perpetual peace within the context of the hope that arises from the practical use of reason because he places principal responsibility for acting in accord with such hope not on all citizens but on the sovereign monarchs of the Europe of his day.<sup>10</sup> Within Kant's own historical context, "Towards Perpetual Peace" is an ironic, perhaps even a sardonic, plea for enlightened political leadership in the matter of international relations based precisely on the hope that the exercise of leadership by kings and princes has power to make a new order among nations possible. Although monarchs no longer wield political sovereignty in our world, Kant's essay retains its sharp moral bite, since there apparently continues to be little effective will for peace among the politically powerful. In our context, however, the moral bite of his proposal is not only for the leaders of nations. We are in a position to recognize more clearly than Kant did that the moral exercise of our reason places the demand to strive for peace upon members of every polity, but especially upon citizens of nations with a republican (representative) form of government (*EF*, 8: 349-51/322-24, 355-56/327-28; cf. *TP*, 8: 310-12/307-9). Political leaders will be far more likely to show an effective will for peace and then act upon it only when it is first voiced as the will of those on whose behalf they exercise their leadership.<sup>11</sup>

The point that Kant makes in his eloquent plea for us to work for perpetual peace is thus quite simple. If anything makes peace "impossible" across our human divisions, it is not the inexorable causal workings of a nature outside human direction; it is not a set of circumstances that lie beyond the power of human beings to alter. International peace as well as the conditions that can bring it about are not impossible to imagine; it seems rather that because they are difficult to achieve, because their achievement will likely require all parties to alter often deeply entrenched particular interests to construct a common interest, it is easier to *declare* them unthinkable or impossible rather than to exercise the imagination and will to make them actual. They are difficult to achieve because they require both

individual and common commitment to overcome what are the real sources that block them: Narrowness of imagination and recalcitrance of will. They are difficult to achieve because they require a form of moral courage that is empowered only by a willingness to act upon the possibilities opened up by a horizon of a cosmopolitan perspective. In Kant's terms, the "impossibility" is one that resides precisely in our capacity to say "no" to that dynamic of the moral exercise of our reason that orders us to mutual moral recognition of one another. It is a form of radical evil, with the consequence that such "impossibility" is one for which we can be held accountable-or, to frame this in terms proper to the social authority of reason, it is an "impossibility" for which we must finally hold one another accountable.<sup>12</sup>

### FOOTNOTES

1. For an overall picture of political and social institutions in Kant's Prussia, see C. B. A. Behrens, *Society, Government and the Enlightenment: The experiences of eighteenth-century France and Prussia*, (London: Thames and Hudson: 1985).
2. For Kant's positive view of the French Revolution, see Manfred Kuehn, *Kant: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 340-343. An earlier treatment of Kant's view, G. P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966 [c.1920]) 276-77, gives details of a rumor that circulated in 1796 that Kant had been invited, through Abbé Sieyès, to come to Paris as an adviser on constitutional law.
3. Kant's works are cited in the text and notes according to the abbreviations below. The citations first provide the pagination from the appropriate volume of Kant's *Gesammelte Schriften* (*GS*) (Ausgabe der Königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1902- ); after the slash, they provide pagination from the corresponding English translation.
  - A/B *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*. English translation: *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
  - AP *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. *GS* 7. English translation: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Trans. Mary J. Gregor. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.
  - CJ *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. *GS* 5. English translation: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Ed. Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
  - IAG "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht." *GS* 8. English translation: "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View." Trans. Lewis White Beck. *Kant On History*. Ed. Lewis White Beck. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.
  - MdS *Die Metaphysik der Sitten*. *GS* 6. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Trans. Mary J. Gregor. *Practical Philosophy*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
  - SF *Der Streit der Fakultäten*. *GS* 7. English translation: *The Conflict of the Faculties*. Trans. Mary J. Gregor and Robert Anchor. *Religion and Rational Theology*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

- Rel* *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. GS 6. English Translation. *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. Trans. George de Giovanni. *Religion and Rational Theology*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- TP* "Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis." GS 8. English translation: "On the common saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice." Trans. Mary Gregor. *Practical Philosophy*. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966.
- AP* *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht*. GS 7. English translation: *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Trans. Mary J. Gregor. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974.
- CJ* *Kritik der Urteilskraft*. GS 5. English translation: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. Trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant. Ed. Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- IAG* "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht." GS 8. English translation: "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View." Trans. Lewis White Beck. *Kant On History*. Ed. Lewis White Beck. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963.
4. For a brief overviews of Kant's continuing influence in liberal political thinking, see William A. Galston, "What Is Living and What Is Living and What is Dead in Kant's Practical Philosophy," *Kant and Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner and William James Booth (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 207-223; Patrick Riley, "The Elements of Kant's Practical Philosophy," *Kant and Political Philosophy* 9-37. For interpretations of the role that Kant's account of autonomy has played see Paul Fairfield, *Moral Selfhood in the Liberal Tradition: The Politics of Individuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Lewis Hinchman, "Autonomy, Individuality and Self-Determination," *What Is Enlightenment: Eighteenth Century Answers and Twentieth Century Questions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 488-516.
  5. I provide an extended account of how Kant understands the authority of reason as fundamentally social in *The Social Authority of Reason: Kant's Critique, Radical Evil and the Destiny of Humankind*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2005.
  6. *Lectures on Logic*, trans. and ed., J. Michael Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 538.
  7. See Kant's letter to C. F. Staudlin of May, 4, 1793 in *Kant: Philosophical Correspondence 1797-1799*, translated and edited by Arnulf Zweig, University of Chicago Press, 1967: 205.
  8. For an elaboration of the notion of the "social self-governance of reason" see Philip Rossi, "Autonomy: Towards the Social Self-Governance of Reason," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 75, 2001: 171-77.
  9. Thus even as globalization makes it possible for human beings to recognize, articulate, and better appreciate the character of their differences, be they of language, race, gender, religion, culture, social practice, be they among individuals, or among communities, it also makes it increasingly possible for individuals or groups of individuals to determine *which* differences they are willing to allow to impinge upon their own lives-even as the recognition of certain differences is accepted as subject to coercive enforcement in the political order. Consider, for instance, what seems to be the persistence of racist and sexist attitudes even in societies

that have developed extensive bodies of legislation and forms of public regulation, especially in the last half-century, to eliminate the impact of these attitudes in the operation of an extensive range of social, economic, cultural and political practices. In the contemporary context of a globalization that provides everyone with access to instantaneous world-wide communication, the possibilities for the articulation, reenforcement and wider dissemination of such divisive attitudes exponentially multiply.

10. This is consistent with his view that political reform is properly and effectively instituted "from above" (*SF*, 7: 92/167) and accords with the stringent limits he placed upon "active citizenship" which restricted effective political voice and power to male-property holders (*TP*, 8: 294-97/294-96; *MdS*, 6: 314-15/458-59). See, however, Patrick Riley, *Kant's Political Philosophy* (Towtown, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1993), 111-13 for an interpretation which eventually allows a notion of citizenship comprehending all adults. Kant does nonetheless remark, with some irony, that rulers still need sage counsel from philosophers to recognize clearly the moral demand for perpetual peace and its bearing upon the decisions these rulers then make (*EF*, 8: 368-69/337-38).
11. An instructive-though still evolving instance-seems to be the peace process in Northern Ireland. Though it has had only a lurching and slow movement forward, it does seem to have a dynamic in which a slowly emerging "on the ground" consensus against violence among the populace has probably been more effective than the public posturing of politicians in staying the hand of militant factions as well as in making possible forms of previously "unthinkable" forms of cooperation and even reconciliation.
12. I wish to acknowledge the State University of New York Press for permission to reprint portions of this essay from Philip J. Rossi, SJ, *The Social Authority of Reason: Kant's Critique, Radical Evil and the Destiny of Humankind* (Albany 2005).