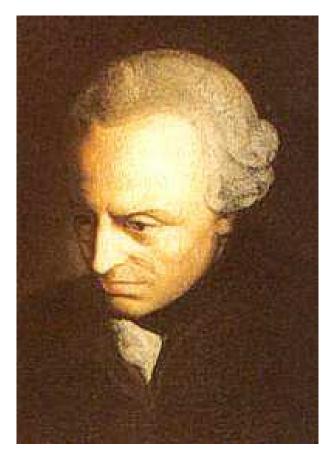
Humanities 4: Lecture 14 Immanuel Kant "Idea for a Universal History"

Kant's Life



- (1724-1804)
- Born, lived, died in Königsberg,
 E. Prussia
- Tutor, academic career
- Philosopher & scientist
- Major contributions in several areas of phil.

Kant's Major Works

- Critique of Pure Reason (1781)
- Critique of Practical Reason (1788)
- Critique of Judgment (1790)

Kant's Theoretical Philosophy

- Synthesis of Empiricism & Rationalism
- Freedom and Moral Responsibility
 - Threats to freedom
 - Epistemic Humility
- *Critique of Pure Reason* occupies moderate position among Enlightenment thinkers.

Kant's Practical Philosophy

- Rationalist vs Empiricist
- Emphasis on Duty as motive
- Categorical Imperative
 - vs. Hypothetical Imperative (desire-based)
 - Basic insights: no exceptions, respect man
 - Various formulations
- Reasons vs. desires

Kant's Aesthetics

- Aesthetic judgments are different in kind from other judgments.
 - Not like knowledge claims or practical principles.
 - Pleasurable, but disinterested.
- New explanation of status of beauty.
 - Not in object.
 - Not in relation to conventional norms.
 - Rather in free play of individual's faculties.

"Idea for a Universal History" Man's Natural Purpose

- Man has a natural purpose, the development of his reason.
 - In the species, not in the individual, since trial & error is nec.
 - Reason is not man's only natural purpose, but most important.
 - Man produces everything out of himself.
 - Nature's "strictest economy" reveals that self-esteem rather than happiness is our ultimate end.
- Two difficulties & resolution
 - Earlier generations exist only for later generations
 - Only later generations profit.
 - Immortality as a species

The Means

- What are the means for developing man's reason?
 - Antagonism: unsocial sociability
 - Man is social, as this makes him feel more like a man.
 - Man is anti-social, as he wants his own ideas realized.
 - Greatest amount of freedom, consistent with the freedom of all, i.e. just civil constitution, is required for antagonism.
- What does it lead to?
 - Transformations
 - From natural capacity for moral discrimination to pr. principles.
 - From pathologically enforced social union to law-governed social order (moral whole)
- Just relations between states

Kant's Political Philosophy

- The most difficult problem in pol. phil.: Who is to be given political authority?
 - It must be given to a man, but every man needs a master.
- States relate to each other as individuals do to each other.
 So, antagonism (i.e., war) leads states to form a federation.

Three Views of History

- What are the possible conceptions of history of the state, according to Kant?
 - Random events until stable system emerges by chance.
 - No rationality in nature and no stability/progress.
 - Nature leads us on a gradual course upwards from lower levels of animality to highest level of humanity.

Summary

- Nature's purpose is to develop man's rational capacities such that mere animals become members of a moral and political community.
 - No explicit religious narrative (though it can be added).
- History is conceived of as linear and progressive
 - What determines the progressive nature of history is the development of reason.