KANT ON DUTIES REGARDING NONRATIONAL NATURE

Allen W. Wood and Onora O'Neill

I—Allen W. Wood

ABSTRACT Kant's moral philosophy is grounded on the dignity of humanity as its sole fundamental value, and involves the claim that human beings are to be regarded as the ultimate end of nature. It might be thought that a theory of this kind would be incapable of grounding any conception of our relation to other living things or to the natural world which would value nonhuman creatures or respect humanity's natural environment. This paper criticizes Kant's argumentative strategy for dealing with our duties in regard to animals, but defends both his theory and most of his conclusions on these topics.

Kant's ethical theory is famously (or notoriously) anthropocentric—or rather, it is *logocentric,* by which I mean that it is based on the idea that rational nature, and it alone, has absolute and unconditional value. Kant takes the authority of the moral law to be grounded in the fact that it is legislated by rational will. The fundamental end whose value grounds the theory is the dignity of rational nature, and its command is always to treat humanity as an end in itself. Here the term 'humanity' is being used in a technical sense, to refer to the capacity to set ends according to reason. It includes the *technical* predisposition to devise means to arbitrary ends, and the *pragmatic* predisposition to unite our ends into a comprehensive whole, called 'happiness'. 'Humanity' is one of the three original predispositions of our nature, along with 'animality', which includes our instinctual desires promoting our survival, reproduction and sociability, and 'personality' which is our rational capacity to give moral laws and obey them (R 6:26, VA 7:321–324).[1] 'Humanity' in this sense does not refer to membership in any particular biological species. (As a matter of fact, Kant thought it quite likely that there are rational beings on other planets; they would be ends in themselves every bit as much as human beings (in the nontechnical sense) (AN 1:351–368).)

Even so, it might seem as though a theory of this kind would license (or even require) a ruthlessly exploitative attitude toward

humanity's natural environment and all nonhuman things in it. For if rational nature is the only end in itself, then everything else must count only as a means to rational nature and its ends. Nothing else could have a worth which might set limits on those ends or on the ways in which rational beings might choose to employ nonrational nature in pursuit of them.

Some of Kant's own statements, moreover, appear to be shameless endorsements of this ghastly inference from his logocentric theory. In his explication of the Formula of Humanity as End in Itself, Kant distinguishes *persons*—rational beings possessing the dignity of rational nature as an end in itself—from *things,* which, he says, 'have only a relative worth, while persons, and they alone, may not be used merely as means' (G 4:428). A similar thought is found at the opening of Kant's lectures on anthropology:

> The fact that the human being can have the representation 'I' raises him infinitely above all the other beings on earth. By this he is a *person*... that is, a being altogether different in rank and dignity from *things*, such as irrational animals, with which one may deal and dispose at one's discretion (VA 7:127).

And in his essay *Conjectural Beginning of Human History,* Kant describes in the following words the sense of self-worth which our first parents acquired when they began to use reason and to reflect on the gulf which this marvellous new capacity put between them and the rest of creation:

> The first time [the human being] said to the sheep, *Nature gave the skin you wear not for you but for me,* and then took it off the sheep and put it on himself (*Genesis* 3:21), he became aware of the prerogative he had by nature over all animals, which he no longer saw as fellow creatures, but as means and tools at the disposal of his will for the attainment of the aims at his discretion (MA 8:114).

Passages like these surely tend to confirm the view, which is widely held among (but not restricted to) animal's rights advocates, proponents of ecological or ecofeminist ethics, and postmodernist critics of rationalism and humanism, that an ethical theory such as Kant's is well-suited to promote those attitudes which have led to the monstrous destruction modern technological society has wrought on nature, and continues to wreak on it with increasing ferocity.

In what follows I will not try to persuade the people just mentioned that Kantian ethics is in full agreement with them.[2] But I will defend my own conviction that Kant's principle, properly interpreted—and more generally, a 'logocentric' morality (in the sense described above)—is the one best suited to dealing with ethical questions about how we should treat nonhuman living things and the natural environment. To that end, I will criticize Kant's manner of interpreting and applying his principle, even to the extent of calling into question one of the assumptions underlying his taxonomy of ethical duties in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. But my ultimate aim will be only to make Kantian logocentrism the more consequent and secure.

A good place to begin is by noting some of Kant's own moral *conclusions* about how nonrational nature is to be treated. These conclusions, though otherwise not particularly remarkable, may be quite different from what we would expect on the basis of the passages just quoted. Kant denies that domestic or work animals are to be treated *only* as tools or objects of use, and insists that there are moral restrictions in the ways we may use them. Animals should not be overworked, or strained beyond their capacities. An animal, such as a horse or dog, which has served us well, should not be cast aside like a worn out tool when it is too old to perform its task; it should be treated with gratitude and affection, like a (human) member of the household, and be allowed to live out its days in comfort. Kant thinks it is permissible to kill animals for human ends (such as for food); but he insists that this should be done as quickly and painlessly as possible (MS 6:443; VE 27:459–460). And he regards killing animals for mere sport as morally wrong (VE 27:460). Kant considers that the actions of vivisectionists, who perform painful experiments on living animals, can sometimes be justified if the ends are sufficiently important. But he regards as morally abominable 'agonizing physical experiments [on animals, carried out] for the sake of mere speculation, or whose end can be achieved in other ways' (MS 6:443). He praises Leibniz for taking the trouble to place a worm back on its leaf after examining it under a microscope (KpV 5:160; cf. VE 27:459). Kant thinks we also have moral duties regarding nature in general as regards what is beautiful or purposive in it. We must not wantonly destroy what is beautiful in nonrational nature.

We ought to take an interest in the beautiful in nature irrespective of any intention to use it (MS 6:443; KU 5:298–299).

The first question we need to raise is how Kant proposes to justify these opinions on the basis of the moral principles described earlier. To answer this question, we must look at the way the principle of morality is applied in Kantian ethical theory. Common interpretations of Kantian ethics (which appear to be based exclusively on the first forty pages or so of the *Groundwork,* and completely ignore his explicit account of the matter in the *Metaphysics of Morals*), suppose this procedure has to do with formulating maxims and deciding whether they can be universalized. But it does not. Instead it consists in attending to the various ethical duties which can be grounded on the principle of morality,—nearly always, in the *Metaphysics of Morals*, using the Formula of Humanity as End In Itself. The *Metaphysics of Morals* contains a taxonomy of such duties, and to understand the authentically Kantian approach to any particular moral question is first of all to understand its relation to the principles of that taxonomy.

The first division of duties in Kant's system is that between *duties of right* or *juridical duties* and *duties of virtue* or *ethical duties*. Duties of right are those which can be coercively enforced by law and the state. Duties of virtue are those to which a moral agent must be constrained only inwardly by her own reason. We have no direct duties of right regarding nonrational nature, since only finite rational beings (in our experience, human beings) have enforceable *rights* (MS 6:241). Any juridical duties we might have involving the treatment of nonrational nature must be consequent to the rights of human beings and laws made by the general will of a state—for example, their rights of property over nonrational things, and laws promoting the common good or fulfilling its collective moral duties (such as duties of charity toward the poor) (MS 6:325–328). Kant mentions no specific juridical duties regarding animals or the natural environment under the latter heading, but it is worth noting that there is room for them. In Kant's theory, the fact that nonrational beings have no rights does not entail that the general will of a state may not legislate restrictions on how they may be used or treated.

The most fundamental division among *ethical* duties is between duties toward ourselves and duties toward others. Kant never gives us an explicit account of what it means for a duty to be a duty *to or toward* (*gegen*) someone. But it is not hard to construct such an account. As we have seen, Kant regards only rational beings as *persons,* which are to be treated as ends, regarding all other beings as *things*. Even his statement of the Formula of Humanity as End in Itself—'*So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*' (G 4:429)—involves the idea that humanity or rational nature has a moral claim on us only *in the person of* a being who actually possesses it. This idea is what I will call the *personification principle.* Kant's division of ethical duties into duties to ourselves and duties to others may be regarded as a corollary of the personification principle. Duty *d* is a duty *toward S* if and only if *S* is a rational being (or more than one), and the moral requirement to comply with *d* is grounded on the moral requirement to respect humanity *in the person of S.*

Duties to ourselves are those required on account of the respect we owe humanity in our own person: Kant considers all such duties to fall under the end of our own *perfection* (natural or moral), since we show respect for humanity in our own person by promoting the perfection our rational nature and of the powers at its disposal (MS 6:385–387). Duties to ourselves are *strict* (or owed) duties, if they require us to perform or omit specific actions in order to avoid moral blame or demerit; they are *wide* (or meritorious) duties if they require no such specific actions but actions in fulfilment of them are meritorious (MS 6:390–394).

Following the personification principle, all duties which are not to ourselves are required on account of the respect we owe humanity in the person of *other* rational beings; they fall collectively under the end of the happiness of others, since we show respect for humanity in others by promoting the (permissible) ends set by their rational nature, which are summed up in the idea of a person's happiness (MS 6:387–388). Duties to others are further distinguished into duties of respect and duties of love (which parallels the distinction between strict and wide duties in the case of duties to ourselves) (MS 6:448–450).

It follows from the personification principle that there can be no duties *toward* animals, toward nature as a whole, or indeed toward *any* nonrational being at all (MS 6:442). Yet in an interesting section of the *Metaphysics of Morals* (MS §§ 16–17, 6:442–443), Kant argues that we nevertheless have duties *in regard to* (*in Ansehung*) nonrational beings. These duties, he says, *appear* to be duties *toward* them, owing to an 'amphiboly of moral concepts of reflection', that is, a sort of conceptual illusion which leads us to mistake a duty to oneself for a duty to beings other than oneself.

Kant argues that our duty to cherish and promote what is beautiful in nonrational nature irrespective of its usefulness, and to behave with kindness and gratitude toward animals, are really duties to promote our own moral perfection by behaving in ways that encourage a morally good disposition in ourselves. Kant claims that appreciation for the beauty of nature, by awakening in us the disposition to value something apart from its usefulness for our ends, prepares the way for a genuinely moral disposition in our behaviour toward rational beings (MS 6:443; cf. KU 5:298–303). Similarly, practising kindness and gratitude toward animals cultivates attitudes of sympathy and love toward human beings, while callousness or cruelty toward animals promotes the contrary vices and makes worse people of us.

These arguments, even if they are correct as far as they go, are still not very satisfying. They do not adequately articulate the reasons why most of us think we should cherish natural beauty and care about the welfare of other living things, for the simple reason that (true to Kant's principles) they do not involve valuing nonrational nature or the welfare of living things for their own sake, but treat the whole of nonrational nature as a mere means, having only an extrinsic and instrumental value. That the end served by acting well toward nonrational nature is that of our own moral virtue may even strike us as only making matters worse, since it seems to enshrine the insufferable Kantian proposition that the whole of nature is worth nothing except in relation to our own self-righteousness. Another way to bring out the unsatisfactoriness of Kant's arguments is to observe that if it happened to be a quirk of human psychology that torturing animals would make us that much kinder toward humans (perhaps by venting our aggressive impulses on helpless victims), then Kant's argument would

apparently make it a duty to inflict gratuitous cruelty on puppies and kittens so as to make us that much kinder to people. Seen in this light, Kant's argumentative strategy must strike us not only as unpersuasive but even as downright repugnant.[3]

What we should not fail to notice, however, is that, whatever its weaknesses, this strategy is actually *forced* on Kant by purely theoretical considerations. For Kant's logocentric principle requires him to ground all duties in the value of humanity or rational nature, and his personification principle compels him to regard every duty as a duty *to* some rational being or beings. Hence duties regarding nonrational nature must be either a duty to others (promoting the happiness of other human beings), or else on a duty to ourselves (promoting our own perfection).

Given these options, I submit, Kant has at least made the best of an extremely bleak situation. He has avoided treating the beauty of nature and the welfare of nonrational living things merely as means to what human beings *want*—as he would have done if he had argued, for example, that we should treat animals with kindness and preserve the beauties of nature only because people happen to want animals not to suffer and find natural beauty and purposiveness pleasant or useful. By grounding duties regarding nonrational nature in our duty to promote our own moral perfection, Kant is saying that whatever our other aims or our happiness may consist in, we do not have a good will unless we show concern for the welfare of nonrational beings and value natural beauty for its own sake. This means he comes as close as his theory permits him to treating nonrational nature as good independently of the ends of rational beings.

Yet even if Kant has made the best of a bad situation, the features of his ethical theory which forced a bad choice on him are still open to criticism. Many will think it self-evident that the offending feature of Kantian ethics is simply its *logocentrism*, the fact that it recognizes no value which is independent of the dignity of rational nature. Logocentrists such as myself, however, will want to avoid this conclusion. We think that there is a tight connection between the fact that rational beings are capable of appreciating and accepting valid norms and values and the idea that their rational capacity, which provides the sole possible authority for such norms and values, must be seen as their ground.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to trot out the positive arguments in defence of Kantian logocentrism (something I have done elsewhere).[4] What does need to be emphasized here is one distinctive feature of that starting point, which is that it grounds ethical theory neither in a principle to be obeyed nor in an end to be pursued, but in a value to be esteemed, honoured or respected. This is fundamentally what it means to say that humanity or rational nature is an *end in itself.* This is why Kant describes an end in itself not as an 'end to be effected' but as an 'independently existing' or 'self-sufficient end' *(selbständiger Zweck)* (G 4:437). That rational nature is an end in itself is closely related in Kant's view to the *dignity* of rational nature, its absolute value, which cannot be substituted for or rationally traded off against anything, but which must be unconditionally respected in all our actions (G 4:434–435).[5]

To treat rational nature as an end in itself is to display or express in one's actions that one recognizes its absolute and unconditional value.[6] From a Kantian standpoint, much of the difficulty and complexity of moral questions lies in the fact that the expressive meaning of actions regarding the dignity of rational nature is often hard to interpret, inherently controversial, in part culturally variable and in no wise subject to the elegant decision procedures which some other ethical theories (such as utilitarianism) think they can provide. But Kant's theory of duties is based on some claims about it which are hard to dispute. In the case of duties to ourselves, respecting rational nature means not only preserving and perfecting it but also acting in such a way as to live up to it or to be worthy of its dignity. In the case of duties to others, we ought to seek their happiness because it is the sum total of their ends, and we ought to honour their rational nature which has set those ends by helping to promoting them.

I will argue that where Kant goes wrong regarding his theoretical defence of our duties regarding nonrational nature is not in accepting his logocentric principle but in accepting what I have called the *personification principle.* This principle says that rational nature is respected only by respecting humanity *in someone's person,* hence that every duty must be understood as a duty to a *person* or persons. Now it may seem self-evident that to respect or honour rational nature is always to honour it in the person

of some rational being; it may even seem nonsensical or self-contradictory to think that we could honour rational nature in a being which does not have rational nature. But consider, for example, the ways theistic religions honour the supreme perfection, goodness and power of God. It is not the case that they honour God *only* in actions which have God alone as their object. On the contrary, all theistic religions hold that it is essential to the worship of God that we behave in certain ways toward beings other than God, because these beings stand in certain salient relations to God, such as being his creatures or being made in his image. These relations to God which make our conduct toward them expressive of our love for and devotion to God.

St. Augustine takes a controversial position among theists when he maintains that we must love creatures, including other human beings, only *for God's sake*, and that it is sinful to love any creature for its own sake.[7] This is controversial because it is more common for theists to hold that it is not only permissible to love creatures for their own sake, but that the proper worship of God *consists* (in part) in loving them for their own sake.[8] Even St. Augustine, however, holds that our devotion to God requires that we *love* God's creatures, especially his human creatures. Hence even St. Augustine rejects the theistic analogue of Kant's personification principle—which would say we must love and worship God *only in God's person,* and that we must regard creatures only as means. Likewise, I argue, a logocentric ethics, which grounds all duties on the value of humanity or rational nature, should not be committed to the personification principle. It should hold that honouring rational nature as an end in itself sometimes requires us to behave with respect toward nonrational beings if they bear the right relations to rational nature. Such relations, I will argue, include having rational nature only potentially, or virtually, or having had it in the past, or having parts of it or necessary conditions of it.

Some of Kant's critics object to his saying that I should respect *humanity* in your person, thinking that this somehow means that I do not really respect *you*. Perhaps he conceived the personification principle as a concession to such people, because by guaranteeing that I respect humanity only in some *person,* and never in anything else (KpV 5:76), it seems to fend off the notion that my respect is directed only toward humanity or rational nature in the abstract.

But if the personification principle is a concession to this line of thinking, then it is an ill-considered one, which Kant should not have made. Of course we should respect rational nature *in* persons, and this means respecting the persons themselves. But my main argument here depends on saying that we should *also* respect rational nature *in the abstract*, which entails respecting fragments of it or necessary conditions of it, even where these are not found in fully rational beings or persons.

The point I am making is easiest to see, and hardest to deny, in the case of many human beings (in the nontechnical sense) who lack 'humanity' (in the technical sense), and therefore must fail (technically) to be persons at all.[9] They include small children and people who have severe mental impairments or diseases which deprive them, either temporarily or permanently, of the capacity to set ends according to reason. Clearly Kant would not want to say that such human beings are mere things, which are to be treated only as means. The important thing, though, is not what Kant would want to say, but rather what is required by a reasonable interpretation of his basic principle that rational nature should be respected as an end in itself. The point is that it would show contempt for rational nature to be indifferent to its potentiality in children, and to treat children as mere things or as mere means to the ends of those beings in whom rational nature is presently actual. Owing to the fragility and vulnerability of the potentiality for rational nature in children, Kant's principle might even dictate giving priority to its development in children over promoting some of the ends of actual rational beings. It might, for example, require adults to devote scarce resources to protecting, caring for and educating small children, instead of using these resources to satisfy their own contingent ends. Similar points might be made about respecting rational nature in people who have temporarily lost it through disease or injury. It would show contempt for rational nature not to care about them, and to do nothing to help them recover their rational capacities. Further, the value of rational nature arguably also forbids our treating human corpses as mere lumps of decaying matter to be gotten out of the way or put to whatever use seems most serviceable. We honour the rational nature that was formerly present there, for example, by making

only such use of the organs of dead people as those people consented to when they were alive and exercising their reason.

The vital point here is not that these judgments accord with our pretheoretical moral intuitions, but that the dignity of rational nature, the value grounding Kant's own principle, commits him to a rejection of the personification principle, since it involves placing value on *nonrational* beings (hence on what are, on Kant's theory, literally or technically *nonpersons*), and even giving this value priority to some of the ends of rational beings (who are literally persons).

It may be offensive to some to hear that on Kant's theory, children, the mentally incapacitated and so on are literally nonpersons. They may think it self-evident that personhood must extend to all living human beings. But if we are to go beyond mere prejudice in extending personhood this far, then we need to specify what features human beings have that justifies giving it to them and only to them. Being a member of a certain biological species, as many animal rights advocates correctly point out, is not a sufficient reason; if we try to justify it by the fact that they are members of *our* species, then this seems no more justifiable than (and objectionable for precisely the same reasons as) giving certain people special status because they are members of our race or nationality. If, like Kant, we do identify some property (such as rational nature) which grounds moral personhood, then (whatever property this is) it seems likely that some members of the human species will not have it. So any view about what counts as a person which goes beyond mere prejudice is likely to be committed to the view that some human beings are literally nonpersons. In any case, it is not as if there were no problems about what counts as a person even if we think that personhood extends to all living human beings—as is clear from controversies about the moral status of fetuses.[10]

Once we see that a reasonable interpretation of the principle of humanity as an end in itself requires us to respect the value of rational nature even in human beings who are literally nonpersons, it becomes less difficult to see that there might be an issue about whether respect for rational nature limits our conduct in the case of nonhuman nature in general.[11] Relevant here is a paradox present in Kant's own discussion of our duties in regard to natural

beauty. Recall that Kant says that our duty to further our own moral perfection requires us to appreciate and preserve natural beauty *for its own sake*.[12] Here Kant is apparently acknowledging that something, namely natural beauty, can have *worth for its own sake* (and not merely as a means) without being rational nature *in the person* of some rational being. This is still consistent with Kant's logocentrism as long as the value of natural beauty for its own sake is in some way derived from the fundamental value of rational nature; but it seems obviously inconsistent with logocentrism if it is interpreted through the personification principle.[13] The personification principle, then, although it is even incorporated in Kant's statement of the Formula of Humanity, involves an interpretation of the basic idea behind that principle which is false and even inconsistent with Kant's own conclusions.

To reject the personification principle is to reject the most fundamental taxonomical principle of Kant's doctrine of virtue, the principle that divides all ethical duties exhaustively into duties to ourselves and duties to others. But this rejection opens the way for us to recognize, solely on the basis of Kant's logocentric principle and without introducing any value outside that of rational nature, duties regarding nonrational beings which are not based on or derived from any duties *toward* rational beings.[14]

I submit that this way of looking at Kantian logocentrism does a far better job of grounding duties regarding animals—even the duties Kant himself recognizes—than do Kant's own arguments (which are restricted by the personification principle in ways we have noted). For although nonhuman animals may not possess rational nature itself, they do possess recognizable fragments of it. They have capacities which we should value as the infrastructure, so to speak, of rational nature. Many animals have desires and they experience pleasure or pain. To frustrate an animal's desires or to cause it pain maliciously or wantonly is to treat with contempt that part of rational nature which animals share with human beings. Many animals also have what Tom Regan calls 'preference autonomy': that is, they have preferences and the ability to initiate actions to satisfy them.[15] Preference autonomy is not the same as the rational autonomy on which Kantian ethics is grounded, but it is a necessary condition for rational autonomy and part of its structure.[16]

Kant himself holds that respect for rational nature requires us to respect the natural teleology involved in the animal part of our own nature. This is the basis of his arguments about our duties to ourselves regarding self-preservation and the enjoyment of food, drink and sex (MS 6:422–428). The desires in question are, in effect, the infrastructure of our own rational nature as regards survival, nourishment and reproduction. If respect for the rational nature served by this natural teleology requires that it not be thwarted or frustrated, then once we are free of the restrictions of the personification principle it seems reasonable to extend this argument and claim that respect for rational nature requires similar constraints regarding the natural teleology in nonrational living things.

Kant's own arguments are based on the idea that someone who behaves cruelly, carelessly or maliciously toward an animal, needlessly tormenting it or frustrating its desires, behaves in a way that closely resembles the misconduct of a person who disrespects rational nature in the person of a rational being by frustrating a human being's permissible ends. But the resemblance is morally relevant, on Kantian principles, only if the behaviour in both cases exhibits what is morally the same trait of character—which it does if what it expresses regarding rational nature is the same, as by disrespecting in the animal those fragments or underpinnings of rationality which we share with animals. Ingratitude toward the long service of a dog or horse is an expression of contempt for its qualities of devotion and affection; this is morally quite similar to treating with contempt the same qualities in a rational creature who has treated you well. It is similar, on Kantian principles, only if what it expresses is a contempt for qualities that are shared between rational and nonrational creatures, and it should be condemned for the contempt it thereby necessarily expresses toward rational nature.

Even Kant's own arguments about our duties regarding animals make sense only if we suppose that cruelty, ingratitude or callousness toward animals already itself expresses disrespect for rational nature (whatever its effects might be on our conduct toward human beings). When Kant argues that kindness and gratitude toward animals promote similar dispositions to behave toward human beings, he is apparently assuming that it does so by

a mechanism of habituation. That is, he is assuming that we acquire a certain morally relevant trait of character by performing actions that exhibit that trait. But if that is the assumption, then our behaviour toward animals is reasonably taken as reinforcing kindness and gratitude toward human beings only if we take it as already exhibiting the very same trait we are trying to reinforce by habituation—that is, the trait with the same expressive meaning as regards the worth of rational nature. Hence Kant's argument seems tacitly to presuppose that kindness and gratitude toward animals already express respect for rational nature, while attitudes of cruelty, exploitativeness and thoughtless disregard for the welfare of animals express contempt for rational nature.

Of course as long as Kant is in the grip of the personification principle, he cannot acknowledge this explicitly.[17] But I think he is doing his best to express it when he *avoids* treating our duties in regard to animals as duties based on the happiness of others (who will presumably benefit from the kindness we are fostering in ourselves), and argues instead that it is a duty to ourselves. For this implies that we aren't in the right moral condition unless we value the welfare of animals for its own sake. This actually comes quite close to an explicit admission on Kant's part that the trait of being kind toward animals is good because this kindness itself shows respect for rational nature. If Kant had been more consequent in his logocentrism, he would have made the admission openly.

To say that Kantian ethics allows us to value nonhuman living animals and their welfare for its own sake does not, of course, determine in detail how they are to be treated. The view I am defending falls considerably short of saying that animals have *rights*. I do not know how in general to decide when the welfare of nonrational beings should prevail over the ends and interests of rational beings.[18] My aim here is not to work out the details of what logocentrism implies about our duties regarding nonrational nature, but only to say what its general approach is, and why I think it is the most defensible one.

I now want to leave behind Kant's arguments about our duties regarding particular nonrational creatures, such as animals, and turn to what Kantian ethics says about the larger question about our duties regarding the natural environment as a whole. Perhaps the most natural charge here is the charge that by uniquely

privileging rational beings in its scheme of values, Kantian ethics leads to a monstrously megalomaniacal view of the world in which human beings regard themselves as the lords of nature, and think of nature as a whole as existing only for their sake.

I won't deny that logocentrism does involve a view of that kind. In Kant, moreover, it is quite explicit. In the critique of teleological judgment, Kant argues that in order to unify our cognitions of the natural world, we should try to see the whole of nature as a single teleological system. Just as Aristotle does in the opening lines of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Kant thinks a teleological system can be unified only through the subordination of some ends to others in hierarchical fashion, until finally the entire system is united by being ordered to one 'ultimate end' (*letzter Zweck*) (KU 5: 425–434). For otherwise the system, even if all its parts somehow were ordered purposively to others, would lack finality: each part might be there for the sake of something, but the series of ends would run on endlessly, and the whole would be purposeless.

Kant does insist that there be an ultimate end of nature: and this end he locates in human beings.[19] He considers here the objection of Linnaeus, that human beings are no more exempt than anything else in nature from serving as means to other living things or the stability of purposive systems (as we do when, like brave Hotspur, we become food for worms[20]) (KU 5:427). Kant accepts the point that in nature we are means as well as ends, but notes that if this argument proved that human beings are not the ultimate end of nature, it would also thereby prove that nature could have no ultimate end, and hence—contrary to an indispensable regulative principle of reflective judgment—that nature cannot be conceived as a finally unified teleological system (KU 5:428).

Kant's ground for holding that of all the beings interconnected as means and ends within nature, human beings alone can be thought of as the ultimate end because they alone can form the concept of ends and organize the mere aggregate of such ends into a system (KU 5:426–427). His argument here parallels the argument that rational nature has supreme worth or dignity as an end in itself, since in both cases it turns on the idea that the pivotal place in a system of objective values (norms or ends) must be occupied by beings having the capacity to make objective judgments about such values.

Kant's view that human beings are the ultimate end of nature is, however, emphatically *not* a view of nature which sees it merely as a tool or raw material for human beings to do with as they please. It is instead another way of looking at the dignity of rational nature, regarded as something we have a duty to live up to. When we regard ourselves as the ultimate end of nature, we look at nature as a unified and harmonious teleological system—the term for it today would be 'ecosystem'—and we undertake the responsibility of shaping our ends in such a way that they provide this system with its crowning unity and harmony. Far from putting nonrational nature at our arbitrary disposal, this orientation toward nature imposes on us the responsibility both of making sense of nature as a purposive system and then of acting as preservers and guarantors of that system.

Clearly we do not do this when we exploit parts of nature for our arbitrary ends, giving no thought to the long term consequences of what we do. Nor do we do it when we destabilize the existing system of natural ends, leading to the destruction of entire living species and even of entire natural environments within which alone the survival of whole systems of species remains possible. Rather, we do it only insofar as we make the effort to *understand* nature as a system of ends, and then act toward it in such a way that our own ends harmonize with that system. This involves simultaneously a theoretical and a practical responsibility—which is why we find it brought out explicitly in the *Critique of Judgment*, where Kant is chiefly concerned with the unification of the standpoints of theoretical and practical reason.

An ethical viewpoint of this kind, in my view, is the one which stands the best chance of making theoretical sense of the attitude intelligent and morally sensitive people already take toward our duties regarding the natural environment. Such people think that we should try to understand the delicate balance of natural ecosystems and take care not to upset them. But the very conception of an 'ecosystem'—as well as of the 'beauty' and 'balance' found in it and the value of its preservation and that of the species of living things which belong to it—these are always products of our rational reflection on nature and our attempts to maximize unity and harmony in what we find. Both our cognitive and our practical interests must be engaged for nature to appear to

us at all in this way, and it is only to beings with rational ends that nature could appear as a system requiring to be fostered or preserved.[21]

This does not mean, of course, that only a logocentric or Kantian ethics could see nature as a system which is to be valued in such a way. The harmonious system of nature might be valued, for example, as God's creation, or as the embodiment of some other kind of value, religious or aesthetic—as it is by many contemporary views which at least nominally reject logocentrism in any form. But some of these views turn out to be committed to logocentrism when their presuppositions are thought through consistently, however stubbornly their proponents may assert the contrary. For example, if we honour creation for God's sake, then what we are doing implicitly relies on some account of the goodness of God. God's goodness has usually been understood as the supreme perfection of will, to which our rational capacities stand as an image or lesser imitation. It is hard to make sense of this account of God's goodness except by treating it as a form of logocentrism. More resolute attempts to reject logocentrism in recent times usually involve talk about reverence for nameless mysteries or for otherness in the abstract—in other words, to schemes of value which are utterly opaque or even openly paradoxical, typically backed by attitudes of blame or condescension directed toward anyone who refuses to embrace the paradoxes spontaneously and uncritically. As Romantic, existentialist and postmodernist thought all amply illustrate, it is far easier to disavow logocentrism in words than to articulate an intelligible alternative to it.

Some may think that the value of nature is to be apprehended not by reason but by some higher faculty, aesthetic or religious, which operates through special feelings or intuitions of which, as Pascal says, reason knows nothing.[22] But they have the problem of getting the rest of humanity to share these intuitions, and (having abjured reason) they cannot hope to do so by appealing to evidence or argument. They seem to be excluded by the nature of the case from explaining to anyone who does not share their feelings why they too should value the preservation of natural species and ecosystems. The problems posed by human conduct toward nature, whatever else they may be, are massive problems

of co-ordination, whose solution requires successful rational communication and concerted effort. If these problems could be solved merely at the level of shared feelings or intuitions, then surely we would not be confronting them the first place. To propose in the face of them that we abandon reason in favour of something more immediate and less corrupt is not to suggest a new solution but only to express the wish (as vain as it is pious) that we should never have brought our present predicament upon ourselves at all.

In this way of thinking there is a good deal of what Kant called 'misology' or hatred of reason. Such hatred, Kant thought, is a natural consequence of gaining insight into two important truths, both probably associated most closely with the name of Rousseau, but which Kant himself insisted on as emphatically as anyone. The first is that from what human history shows us, reason turns out not to be a good instrument for making rational beings happy or contented. It complicates their lives, generating new desires and creating new and more complicated circumstances in which people must devise ways of satisfying them. The second truth is that the development of reason also arouses a profoundly vicious side of human nature—self-conceited, self-centred, insatiably greedy and prone to all kinds of pernicious errors and delusions—which can easily make humanity appear to itself not as the ultimate end of nature but on the contrary as nature's most deformed and dangerous mistake (R 6:26–39).

Kant thinks that misology, like discontent and vice, is a by-product precisely of the development of reason. In fact, it is merely another aspect of the discontent with themselves which Kant takes to be the peculiar fate of finite rational beings. He views this discontent as itself part of the system of natural teleology, since it serves the function of inciting rational creatures to employ their reason in the further development of their capacities. For reason involves above all the capacity to which Rousseau gave the name 'perfectibility'—the capacity to adopt new and varied ways of life, and to develop varied abilities and modes of behaviour in response to new situations and new needs.

One characteristic delusion of human misology is the sweet dream of an earlier, less troubled, more innocent age—a Golden Age or Garden of Eden, or the fantasies which more developed

cultures project on earlier stages of their own history or else on foreign peoples, whom (in their imperfect comprehension of other ways of life) they often fancy to correspond to a happier and less corrupted version of themselves (MA 8:122–123). The hatred of reason then sometimes takes the form of a wish to return to this more innocent state. This is of course a deeply deluded wish, not only because the condition they imagine never did and never could exist in the form they imagine it, but also because the natural function of such imaginings is exactly the opposite of what is projected in the wish. For that function is to make us discontented with our present condition and prod us to develop our capacities *further*, making our lives *more* rational. Only in this way, moreover, in Kant's view, do we have any prospect of overcoming the vice and misery brought on by our reason in its present condition, which is still merely in the early stages of its development and has far to go in perfecting itself.

There is a grave danger in such imaginings, however, which is that people may really try to actualize their impossible delusions of a lost past, precisely by suppressing reason and divesting themselves of its achievements. In this respect, misology—even in the relatively benign forms which take themselves to be trying merely to save us from the catastrophes to which the excessive arrogance of our reason may lead us—has more in common than it wants to acknowledge with the characteristically modern cultural phenomenon we know as *fundamentalism*. Every fundamentalism is a superstition which has lost its innocence, an idea which, through the advance of reason, has lost its authority over the human mind and now seeks to reclaim its former position by wreaking vengeance upon reason—especially on its capacity for openness and self-criticism (since fundamentalism correctly perceives that they are chiefly to blame for depriving old superstitions of their ancient rights). Those who like to think in terms of catastrophes (ecological or otherwise) will be well occupied in contemplating the possible triumph of this most common and virulent form of misology.

In response to misology in all its forms, Kant's logocentric thought is that although the only reason we have is limited, imperfect and even corrupt, the only cure for the ills it brings upon us is *more* reason, a better developed and perfected reason applied

more consistently and resolutely. Since there is no *a priori* assurance that the progress of reason will ultimately be victorious over the evil in human nature that accompanies it, this is not a comforting or consoling thought. But it is the only thought that orients us in such a way that we may still hope to avert the catastrophes we have most reason to fear.

NOTES

1. Kant's writings will be cited according to volume:page number in the *Gesammelte Schriften*, Ausgabe der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1902–). For individual works, the following abbreviations will be used:

AN	*Allgemeine Naturgeschichte und Theorie des Himmels* (1755)
I	*Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784)
G	*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785)
MA	*Muthmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* (1786)
KpV	*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788)
KU	*Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790)
R	*Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (1793–1794)
MS	*Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797–1798)
VA	*Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht* (1798)
VE	*Moralphilosophie Collins.*

2. An articulate presentation of the thesis that we cannot relate properly to other living things on the basis of the proposition that human beings are superior to the rest of nature is found in Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Similar views may be found in Karen Warren, 'Feminism and Ecology: Making Connections', *Environmental Ethics* 9 (1987), and 'The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism', *Environmental Ethics* 12 (1990).

3. For a further critical discussion of this line of argument, see Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights*, pp. 174–185.

4. See 'Humanity as End In Itself', *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1995) I.1:307–310.

5. If it is *humanity*, in the technical Kantian sense of the capacity to set ends according to reason, which is an end in itself, then it is *personality*, or the capacity to give and to follow objectively valid moral laws, which gives rational nature its dignity. See *ibid.*, pp. 306–307, R 6:26, and G 4:435–436, 440.

6. The reasons for acting provided by Kant's principle are therefore fundamentally expressive reasons, in Elizabeth Anderson's sense of that term. See Elizabeth Anderson, *Value in Ethics and Economics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

7. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 1.4.4, cf. 1.22.21.

8. This is the position taken, for example, by Robert M. Adams, 'The Problem of Total Devotion', in Neera Kapur Badhwar (ed.) *Friendship: A Philosophical Reader* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 108–133. Adams holds that love for God can and should inspire love for other human beings, and that love involves valuing the object of love for his or her own sake, not merely for something else's sake (even for God's sake).

9. Regan sees this point in his discussion of the difficulty Kant has dealing with *human* 'moral patients', *The Case for Animal Rights*, pp. 182–184.

10. A Kantian position on this issue would have to begin with the acknowledgment that fetuses are not literally persons, while the women in whose bodies they are growing are

literally persons. But if it abandons the personification principle, as I am advocating, then the Kantian position could also make room for arguments that respect for rational nature might limit what it is permissible to do to fetuses because, like small children they are beings which have rational nature potentially. Obviously in the case of a small child, however, rational nature has already begun its development, and obviously issues about violating the bodily integrity of an actual person in order to protect the claims of a fetus do not arise in the same way in the case of small children. So claims on behalf of fetuses will be harder to make out than those on behalf of children.

11. My Kantian defence of duties regarding animals must be distinguished from the one offered by Christine Korsgaard in *The Sources of Normativity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 152–160. Her argument is more Kantian than mine, in that it (in effect, though not in so many words) accepts the personification principle, but then attempts to argue that animals (though not plants) should count as persons (or, as Korsgaard puts it, being an animal is 'a way of being someone', p. 156). She does so by grounding the value of personhood (as Kant does in his argument at G 4:428–429) on the fact that persons value themselves, and then by asserting (in what seems to me a brazenly paradoxical way) that animals do indeed value themselves.

> [Pleasure and pain] are expressive of the value that an animal places on itself. It sounds funny to say that an animal places value on itself, because for us that is an exercise of reflection, so it sounds as if it means that the animal thinks itself to be of value. Of course I don't mean that, I am just talking about the kind of thing that it is. As Aristotle said, it is its own end. Valuing itself just is its nature. To say that life is a value is almost a tautology. Since a living thing is a thing for which the preservation of identity is imperative, life is a form of morality (p. 152).

For only a few brief sentences, this provides a lot to disagree with. To start near the end: 'Almost' implies close proximity, but the claim that life is a value—taken in any of the many senses which that assertion has been given by those who have made it and thought it importantly true—is far from tautologous. Secondly, life cannot *literally* be an imperative for any being incapable of comprehending or acting on imperatives. But among living things, only rational beings are capable of this. Perhaps life is 'imperative' for living things in some less literal sense—as by meaning that their life processes are purposively directed at survival before any other end which may be ascribed to them. But it is not clear how that fact can play a role in the kind of argument through which Kant attempts to show that rational nature is the sole end in itself, since that argument depends on being able to set ends according to reason, not on being able to exhibit natural purposiveness in general. Thirdly, Kant does agree with Aristotle in thinking that a living thing is its own end when he says that its purposiveness is inner rather than external (KU 5:366–369, 372–376). Neither one of them thought that living things 'value themselves' in any sense those words can reasonably be made to bear. (If being its own end or being internally purposive is enough for having a 'nature' that values itself, then plants clearly have that nature as much as animals do. Being conscious—which is Korsgaard's criterion for distinguishing 'being someone' from not 'being someone'—is relevant only if it is possible to be *conscious of* being someone and of valuing the someone that one is; but Korsgaard admits that animals are no more capable of this than plants. What Korsgaard does seem to hold is that an animal becomes 'someone' through having states (of pleasure and pain) which *express* its valuation of itself. But it seems clear that even in human beings, if pleasure and pain express valuation of something, it is not of *oneself* but only of the condition one is in. Why should we think they express more than this in the case of animals (who are not literally capable of valuing themselves as distinct from valuing their states, as human beings are)? Finally, it is not important for Kant's argument even about human beings that self-valuation should be *reflective*, but it is important that beings said to value themselves have the *capacity* to acknowledge this value reflectively, and hence that they are capable of acting in a way that can be interpreted as committing themselves to thinking of themselves as valuable. Because animals are not capable of such reflection, they are not capable of such behaviour or such commitment.

12. Kant's argument, closely related to one side of his famous claim that 'beauty is a symbol of morality', is that love for natural beauty teaches us how to love something for its own sake, and not merely as a means to our pleasure—the same capacity we exercise

when we value morality or rational nature for its own sake and not as a means to our arbitrary ends (KU 5:351–354).

13. Paul Guyer notes another significant implication of our duty to ourselves to cultivate our appreciation of natural beauty: It, like our duty to cultivate sympathy and love for other human beings, involves a duty to develop our sensitive nature or our inclinations so that they will harmonize with the rational demands of morality. Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Ch. 9: Duties Regarding Nature, especially pp. 315–323.

14. I will not try to decide whether, in rejecting the personification principle, we should revise Kant's claim that we have duties only *toward* rational beings, and only duties *in regard to* nonrational beings. For once the personification principle is rejected, Kant's distinction between duties *toward* a being and duties *in regard to* a being ceases to be either sharp or important.

15. Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights,* pp. 84–86.

16. It is not infrequently noted that like many early modern philosophers, Kant seems to have had a lower opinion of the mentality of nonhuman animals than most of us now find plausible, at least when applied to many higher mammals. He denies to animals not only the conception 'I'—but (on his theory, in consequence of this) the capacity to form concepts, or make judgments, or (consequently) to experience the world as *objective*. In the practical sphere, Kant denies animals the capacity to act on plans or principles or to set ends. Apparently for Kant, the world of an animal consists only of subjective sensations (animals are condemned to be mere phenomenalist empiricists) and the volition of animals is reduced to the immediate response to impulses, which lead to behaviours which are either hardwired into the animal by instinct or follow conditioned patterns which result from empirical associations arising out of such instincts. If we ascribe to animals a greater share in the capacities we account as our rationality, then the arguments that respecting rational nature requires respecting their preferences and volitions can be expected to grow correspondingly stronger. Here, however, I am mentioning only those features of animal mentality which Kant would admit, since I think that even on that basis we can see how respect for rational nature makes a claim on us regarding nonhuman animals.

17. This shows also why, supposing that cruelty to animals made us kinder toward humans, that it would not follow on Kantian principles that we should torture animals to promote virtuous conduct toward people. For the cruelty toward animals would already exhibit a vice, indeed, the very same vice we would be trying to counteract in relation to human beings. Thus even if our psychology made it hard to be kind to both animals and humans, we would still have to try to be kind to both.

18. Here I agree with Paul Guyer, who says that on Kantian principles our duties in regard to nonrational beings must be wide rather than strict duties, and that we can never find a mechanical procedure for deciding between the claims they make on us and the claims made by human ends. Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom,* pp. 326, 328. Actually, Guyer makes this last point not regarding the welfare of animals and humans, but about the claims of nature as a whole and human purposes as a whole (the topic I am about to take up). 'That we have a duty to conserve natural beauty, although we are unable to say that in every case this duty must triumph, seems to me exactly right, and to explain why we can never find a mechanical decision procedure for deciding between the claims of the conservation and the development and exploitation of natural resources' (p. 328).

19. Compare Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom,* pp. 330–334.

20. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One,* Act V, Scene iv, line 86.

21. As Holly Wilson observes, Kant realizes that 'it is only human beings who can cultivate ecosystems, because only they can form the concept of a system', 'Kant and Ecofeminism', forthcoming in Karen Warren (ed.) *Ecofeminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

22. Pascal, *Pensées* 277.

KANT ON DUTIES REGARDING NONRATIONAL NATURE

Allen W. Wood and Onora O'Neill

II—Onora O'Neill

NECESSARY ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND CONTINGENT SPECIESISM

ABSTRACT Kant's ethics, like others, has unavoidable anthropocentric starting points: only humans, or other 'rational natures', can hold obligations. Seemingly this should not make speciesist conclusions unavoidable: might not rational natures have obligations to the non-rational? However, Kant's argument for the unconditional value of rational natures cannot readily be extended to show that all non-human animals have unconditional value, or rights. Nevertheless Kant's speciesism is not thoroughgoing. He does not view non-rational animals as mere items for use. He allows for indirect duties 'with regard to' them which afford welfare but not rights, and can allow for indirect duties 'with regard to' abstract and dispersed aspects of nature, such as biodiversity, species and habitats.

It is a mixed pleasure to comment on a paper whose argument is acute, whose scholarship is deep, and which may leave little to be said. What I shall say will mainly endorse, and sometimes extend, many of Allen Wood's arguments and much of his interpretation of Kant. However, I shall set Kant's complex claim that rational nature has absolute and unconditional value in a rather different context, and indicate how it may bear on ways in which we may think that Kant's ethics is either anthropocentric or speciesist.

Despite some differences I accept most of Wood's conclusions. I too think that Kant's starting points are in a certain sense anthropocentric, but that both his starting point and his conclusions are less speciesist than is often supposed. More controversially, it seems to me unlikely, and certainly undemonstrated, that there is a plausible systematic approach to ethics whose starting point and conclusions are both less speciesist and less blind to the moral importance of abstract or dispersed aspects of nature such as ecosystems, habitats, species or biodiversity. This conclusion may surprise those who think that Kantianism must be the least

promising basis for an account of proper relations between the human and the non-human worlds.

I

Logocentrism and Personification. Wood frames his central claim about Kant's views on the treatment of non-human animals using two not-quite Kantian terms. He begins with the thought that Kant's ethics is 'anthropocentric—or rather it is *logocentric*' meaning that 'it is based on the idea that rational nature, and it alone, has absolute and unconditional value' (AW 189).[1] The switch of terms reflects Wood's surely accurate view that Kant does not simply assume the privileged status of a particular animal species, namely humans. Even if Kant is a speciesist, he is not a human chauvinist who unthinkingly assumes the greater worth of the human species. Not only does he think that non-human rational natures, if any exist, will like humans 'have absolute and unconditional value', but he supports his logocentric claim with substantial arguments.[2]

Wood argues that the problem with Kant's views on non-human animals arises not immediately from logocentrism, which he broadly endorses, but from Kant's advocacy of a *personification principle* (AW 193), which is 'the idea that humanity or rational nature has a moral claim on us only *in the person of* a being who actually possesses it' (AW 193). The personification principle makes a claim about the beings who are on the receiving end of moral action, to whom duties may be owed, and who may in some cases be holders of rights: it implies that 'there can be no duties *toward* [non-human] animals, toward nature as a whole, or indeed toward *any* non-rational being at all' (AW 194; see esp. *MS* 6: 442–5).[3]

Nevertheless, as Wood points out, Kant in no way regards non-rational nature as a mere instrument for human use and

1. References to Wood's paper 'Kant on Duties Regarding Non-rational Nature', this volume pp. 189–210, will be parenthetical, as (AW 9).

2. Kant often mentions the possibility that there are other rational species in the universe. See, for example, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Viewpoint*, where he speculates about rational beings who unlike us 'could not think in any way but aloud' (*VA* 7: 321), among whom face to face deception would presumably be impossible.

3. Reference to Kant's writing will be parenthetical using the same texts and abbreviations as Wood uses and sets out on AW 208; however *VE* will cover all the *Lectures on Ethics*.

despoliation. There are passages in a number of works where he claims that we have duties 'with regard to' irrational nature and in particular 'with regard to' non-human animals, and specifically that we ought to not be cruel to them. These duties are classified as indirect duties, and as following from our direct duties to promote our own moral perfection by cultivating a good disposition in ourselves (*MS* 6: 443–5). On the surface this latter thought seems curious: unless there are *independent* reasons for thinking that decent treatment of non-human animals is an element or source of moral perfection, why should we think that it promotes a moral disposition? The argument needs some further premise, for example a claim that a sensitive attitude to non-rational nature improves attitudes to (parts of) rational nature, or that we tend to transfer attitudes towards the former to the latter.[4]

Wood thinks that this rather unsatisfactory position is forced on Kant by the combination of his commitments to logocentrism and to the personification principle, and claims that by viewing decent treatment of non-human animals as an indirect duty to ourselves Kant at least makes 'the best of an extremely bleak situation' (AW 195). He admires him for making the best of this bad situation, but criticises the 'features of his ethical theory which forced a bad choice on him' (AW 195).

II

Kant on Absolute and Unconditional Value. Kant himself does not use the term 'logocentrism'. Wood introduces it with the claim that a position is *logocentric* if it 'is based on the idea that rational nature, and it alone, has absolute and unconditional value' (AW 189); a later formulation has it that logocentrism 'recognizes no value which is independent of the dignity of rational nature' (AW 195).

The introduction of the notion of *dignity* into the second formulation is, I think, a distraction. Kant introduces the notion of dignity *after* he has established the distinction between those things which are ends in themselves and those which are not. Things which are not ends in themselves may be used as mere means, so may be traded off for other things, and so can have a *price*. By

4. Kant suggests such arguments at *VE* 27: 710.

contrast, ends in themselves may not be used as mere means, so may not be traded, so will be beyond price and may be said to have *dignity*: '...an end in itself has not merely a relative value—that is, a price—but has an intrinsic value—that is, *dignity*.' (*G* 4: 435). Without the prior distinction of things with instrumental or conditional value and those with absolute, unconditional (intrinsic) value, which is the basis for distinguishing what may be traded off and what may not be, there would be no context for distinguishing price from dignity. The fundamental issue is whether and how a distinction between things with and without absolute and unconditional value is to be established.

Kant's strategy in introducing this distinction and arguing for the *Formula of Humanity* in the second Chapter of the *Groundwork* is perplexing. He notes that *if* there were something whose existence is in itself an absolute value, then it and it alone would be the ground of a possible Categorical Imperative (*G* 4: 428). But he does not immediately try to establish the antecedent of the conditional. Rather he insists bluntly that he cannot *show* but only *assert* that certain beings are ends in themselves and so of absolute value, in the words 'Now I say that man, and in general every rational being, *exists* as an end in himself, *not merely as a means* for arbitrary use' (*G* 4: 428). Nor is his next move a demonstration of this assertion. He notes that certain other sorts of things cannot be ends in themselves, and could at most have derivative or instrumental value (objects of inclination, inclinations themselves, the products of human action, natural objects). By contrast, rational natures *if any exist* might be ends in themselves (*G* 4: 429); if none such exist there may be nothing of absolute value.

Two gaps need filling. First, since Kant has in mind a particularly demanding view of what it is to be a rational nature, which he sees as a natural being with ability to act freely and to reason, one cannot simply take for granted that humans are rational natures in the relevant sense. Second, even if there are rational natures, among them human beings, Kant needs to demonstrate that they are ends in themselves. If he cannot, there may be *nothing* that should be viewed as an end in itself, and so *nothing* of absolute value, and accordingly *no* supreme principle for reason and morality.

Despite his lack of any demonstration in *Groundwork* II that human or any other beings are rational natures and ends in themselves and of absolute value, Kant starts his argument for the Formula of Humanity from the proposition: The ground [of the moral principle] is: '*Rational nature exists as an end in itself*' (*G* 4: 429). He then notes that we—we humans—think of ourselves in this way but confirms that this is no more than subjective, and states baldly in a footnote that the proposition that rational natures including humans are ends in themselves 'is put forward here as a postulate'. (*G* 4: 429, n., cf. *G* 4: 448 for the same strategy). This arresting tactic reminds one uncomfortably of Bertrand Russell's quip that the method of postulation has the advantage over the method of argument that theft has over honest toil.[5]

Unlike Wood, I am inclined to think that there is not and is not meant to be a complete argument for The Formula of Humanity in the second chapter of *Groundwork*, and to take seriously the footnote comment, to which Kant adds the remark that 'The grounds for it [the postulate] will be found in the final chapter' (*G* 4: 429, n.). I take this seriously because Kant has strategic reasons for postponing this essential step of his argument: the context of argument of *Groundwork* II, as of *Groundwork* I, does not have the resources to establish that we (or other seemingly rational beings) are rational natures in the required strong sense, or to show that human or other rational natures have absolute and unconditional value.

In *Groundwork* I Kant had also drawn a distinction between an unconditional good—the good will—and conditional goods—all the others. All the conditional goods were held to be of value only if their use was governed by good willing (*G* 4: 393–4). The sole unconditional good was identified as willing of a certain sort, achievable only by beings capable of free and reasoned action: such rational natures were said to be the only possible source and bearers of unconditional worth. However, in *Groundwork* I, as in *Groundwork* II, no satisfactory argument established that there are any such beings, or in particular that we humans are among them, or that such beings have absolute and unconditional worth. In the

5. Wood has offered a more kindly account of Kant's argument in *Groundwork* II in another recent paper: Allen Wood, 'Humanity as an End in Itself' *Proceedings of the Eighth International Kant Congress*, Vol I, Part 1, pp 301–319, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee. 1995.

last paragraph of Chapter I Kant noted that the framework of ordinary reason had not allowed him to establish 'the source of its own [moral] principle', and in the last sentence that we need 'a full critique of reason' to establish that principle (*G* 4: 405). He stresses just the same gaps in his argument when he points out, in *Groundwork* II, that the claims that human beings are rational natures and ends in themselves and of unconditional worth, is still no more than a postulate. And he is fully aware of the incompleteness of his argument when in the final paragraph of Chapter II he acknowledges that, despite all that has been said, morality may be 'a mere phantom of the brain' and insists in its last sentence that no more can be established without a critique of reason (*G* 4: 445). Kant clearly does not think it either surprising or avoidable that he had to make do with a promissory note in his initial sketch of an argument for the Formula of Humanity.

Kant seeks to complete his argument only in *Groundwork* III beyond 352, where the initial analytic procedure of a 'Metaphysic of Morals' is replaced by a compressed 'Critique of Practical Reason'. There he hopes to show that we humans cannot but assume both that we are parts of nature and that we are free and able to reason (in the required strong sense), in short that humanity *must* take itself to be (part of) rational nature.[6] The argument that the theoretical and practical standpoints are both indispensable but mutually irreducible is, as Kant insists, still less than a proof that humans are rational natures: there is no proof of human freedom, no refutation of scepticism about human freedom. Yet the argument if successful is a powerful strategy for showing that human reasoners must assume that they are rational natures in the required sense, in that it aims to show that if we are sceptics about our own freedom then we will have to be sceptics about our knowledge of the natural order as well.[7] The two standpoints stand and fall together, so calling into question positions which take it that knowledge of the natural order, hence of causal links, can be established independently and then used to argue against the

6. I have attempted a more extended discussion of the strategy of Kant's *Groundwork* and of the interpretation of the Formula of Humanity in 'Universal Laws and Ends in Themselves' and 'Reason and Autonomy in *Grundlegung* III', both in Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, pp 126–44; 51–65.

7. See 'Reason and Autonomy in *Grundlegung* III', esp pp 59 ff.

possibility of human freedom, and so against the whole Kantian moral vision.

The conclusion of *Groundwork* III, that we must take ourselves to be *both* free and reasoning beings *and* part of the natural order, is needed for Kant's to show that we must treat one another and ourselves as having 'absolute and unconditional value'. If human beings must take themselves to be rational natures, they must view themselves as standing in two distinct relationships to action. On the one hand they are agents whose free and reasoned actions bear on others, on the other hand they are parts of nature and so recipients, affected by others' action (and their own). The dual view of ourselves is the pivotal thought behind the Formula of Humanity (and, I would argue, behind other formulations of the Categorical Imperative[8]). Like other formulations of the Categorical Imperative, the Formula of Humanity assumes agency: hence the imperatival form. However, the Formula of Humanity also takes a quite explicit stance on the fact that human beings (or other rational beings) are on the receiving end of action, in that it specifies how they are to be treated.

There are then *two* distinguishable presuppositions of what Wood terms Kant's logocentrism. In the first place there is the indispensable anthropocentric claim that we are agents, to whom moral demands, indeed categorical imperatives, can be addressed. Secondly there is the recognition that we are not merely agents, but rational natures, that is beings who are on the receiving end of one another's action. The first, the indispensable anthropocentric claim, is not peculiar to Kant, although he has distinctive conceptions of freedom and reason. Some form of anthropocentrism is a necessary presupposition of any moral theory or moral discourse: no agents, no morality. Anthropocentric starting points are needed not only by Kant but by other forms of Kantian ethics, by utilitarians, by rights theorists, by virtue ethicists and by others whose conception of morality is not theoretically structured. Kant is distinctive on this point not because he assumes that morality requires agents, but because he has a strong and complex notion of what it is to be free and rational, and so an agent. This indispensable anthropocentrism neither assumes nor establishes any form of speciesist moral conclusions. It says

8. See 'Universal Laws and Ends in Themselves', note 3.

simply that morality requires agents, and leaves open who or what may be on the receiving end of the action that is to be morally regulated, and whether the ways in which they should be treated vary with their species.

The second presupposition of Wood's logocentrism is also widely shared: it is the claim that rational natures are not only agents but are on the receiving end of one another's action. This presupposition is not self evident: it holds only if rational natures lead connected lives, or (as Kant often puts it) 'share a world'. Kant, of course, also assumes that rational natures act on other, non-rational natural objects; however this broader claim is merely part of the background of logocentrism.

Only when both of these presuppositions are in place can the basis for the core of the logocentric claim, the view that rational natures have absolute and unconditional worth, be established. Rational natures who can affect one another by their action may destroy, damage or undercut one another, thereby destroying or damaging the agency that is needed for morality. Either then they must treat one another as ends in themselves, that is as beings with absolute and unconditional worth, or they will in effect reject the indispensable anthropocentrism which any practical reasoning and any moral action presupposes, thereby also undermining their view of themselves as rational natures. Rational natures cannot then coherently refuse to see one another and themselves as ends in themselves, so as beings with absolute and unconditional value: this is the core of logocentrism.

The implications of the view that rational natures have absolute and unconditional value is encapsulated in imperative form in the Formula of Humanity and is developed in the account of human duties which Kant derives from the Formula. If human beings, and perhaps other rational beings, are the only beings known to be capable of reasoned action, the preservation and indeed development of their capacities to act is a condition of there being any action of moral worth. However, since humans (and any other rational natures) can by their action destroy, damage or fail to sustain their own and one another's capacities for agency, their unconstrained action would undercut all moral worth. So if there is to be any morally worthy action, humans (and other rational natures) must accept certain constraints: they must view and treat

one another not as mere means but as self existent ends (ends in themselves). Two sets of duties follow from the two parts of the Formula. The requirement not to use others as mere means underlies 'perfect' duties, which require rational natures not use one another (or themselves) as mere dispensable and disposable means that can be destroyed or damaged or deceived for arbitrary ends, so eliminating, eroding or by-passing agency. The requirement to treat others as ends in themselves underlies 'imperfect' duties: because human agents have fragile and undeveloped abilities and are always, and often intensely, physically and mentally vulnerable to one another, they must, if they are to ensure that moral action has a reliable place in their world, sustain human abilities by developing their own capacities for action (talents) and supporting one another's pursuit of (permissible) ends.

The account of duties presented in *Groundwork* II is evidently tailored to the human case: it is appropriate to rational natures who have a high degree of plasticity (their skills and talents are not naturally fixed but can be developed in many differing ways) as well as a high degree of mutual vulnerability and dependence (which other rational natures might not have). However, other types of beings could use the arguments of *Groundwork* III and supplementary empirical considerations to establish that they were rational natures in the relevant strong sense, and could use an accurate account of ways in which their abilities are plastic and in which they are mutually dependent, hence vulnerable, to establish an appropriate account of their duties. Presumably any population of rational natures must reach the conclusion that if there is to be anything of moral value, then the survival of rational natures is necessary, and hence that they must be committed at least to limiting mutual destruction and damage—the analogue of 'perfect' duties among humans. However, a population of rational natures whose capacities and abilities were fully formed throughout life, or who were less fragile, interdependent and mutually vulnerable than humans, might conclude that, while they were bound to refrain from mutual destruction, damage and deceit, they were not bound to extensive, or even to any, 'imperfect' duties of self-development or of mutual support and beneficence. Not every plurality of rational natures need have just the same duties as humans have.

III

Anthropocentrism and Personification. Logocentrism, as Wood defines it, comprises not only the core view that rational natures are ends in themselves, and of absolute value, but the claim that *only* rational natures are ends in themselves and of absolute value. However, the background arguments for the core of logocentrism do not show that rational agents, among them human agents, must accord unconditional and absolute value *only* to others of their own kind. Perhaps there are other beings, who are incapable of rational agency, but nevertheless have absolute and unconditional worth, or at least a lesser moral standing which all rational agents must recognize. These possibilities have been championed by a wide range of non-Kantian thinkers, many of them concerned about the moral status of human beings lacking rational capacities, of non-human animals and more broadly of the environment.

Although claims on behalf of non-rational beings are easy to state, they are hard to establish. Kant's distinctive argument to show that theoretical reason cannot stand alone, that beings who claim to know the natural order must take themselves to be free and rational in a strong sense, hence must see themselves and one another both as agents and recipients, hence as ends in themselves, and as having unconditional or absolute value, is not readily extended or supplanted.

Wood argues that Kant mistakenly thought that he could not establish any duties to non-rational beings because he also adopts the personification principle, by which every duty is a duty owed to some person or persons (AW 196). The personification principle adds to the logocentric claim that only rational nature has absolute and unconditional value and should be treated as an end in itself, an insistence that this requirement applies only to humanity (more generally: rational nature) *in someone's person.* Given Kant's narrow use of the term *person* this move has stark consequences: duties are owed *only* to rational natures. Even if in practice Kant thinks that there are duties to immature or impaired humans, who are not currently rational, he should not have done so, and he was correctly following the implications of the personification principle in denying that there are human duties to non-human animals, or to other parts of non-rational nature, or to supernatural beings. (AW 196–197, *MS* 6: 443–5) It is the personification

principle rather than logocentrism which, as Wood views it, saddles Kant with speciesist conclusions. In Wood's view this move was unnecessary and mistaken: 'a logocentric ethics, which grounds all duties on the value of human or rational nature, should not be committed to the personification principle'. (AW 197) On the contrary, any logocentrist who is committed to respect for rational nature should also respect both *fragments* of rational nature and *necessary conditions* of rational nature (AW 198). Wood offers this extended view of the proper scope of moral concern as a 'reasonable interpretation' of the basic logocentric principle (AW 198).

The most convincing case for extending the scope of moral concern for rational natures is to those currently less-than-rational beings who are incipiently or nearly rational (who, in Wood's terms, exhibit 'fragments of rationality'), but are not currently persons in Kant's narrow use of the term. For example, extensions are commonly and convincingly argued in favour of human beings whose rational agency is either potential (infants) or temporarily reduced (in illness) or fading (the senile), or borderline (the severely retarded). Kant never in fact doubts that all of these are owed the duties that we owe to those humans who are in the maturity of their faculties: in this respect he was perhaps, and honourably, a speciesist.[9]

The same line of thought might be extended for any non-human animals who exhibit 'fragments of rationality', although Kant does not explicitly do so. Yet, as Wood notes, Kant does not seem to have drawn the conclusion that non-human animals are merely things for unrestricted human use, although he also does not regard them as ends in themselves. On his view, non-human animals should not be wantonly destroyed or cruelly misused, although they may be sold, used for labour (but not for excessive labour) and killed (painlessly) for food (*MS* 6: 442–3; *VE* 27: 434–5; 459–60).

Two sorts of question can be asked about Kant's views on non-human animals. A first, substantive question is whether Kant places sufficient or appropriate restrictions on human uses of non-human animals. I shall leave this question largely unanswered,

9. AW 198–199; Onora O'Neill *Towards Justice and Virtue: a constructivist account of practical reasoning*, Cambridge University Press 1996, Ch 4.

while noting that it would be very surprising if two centuries of increasing knowledge about non-human animals, centuries which include the Darwinian and genetic revolutions, and during which the place of non-human animals in systems of transport and production has been transformed, had no implications for Kant's substantive views of animal–human relations.

The second question is why Kant (as it may seem rather priggishly) classifies duties with regard to non-human animals as *indirect* duties falling under the imperfect human duty of self improvement. Even if Kant does not begin with speciesist assumptions, does not the fact that he establishes no direct duties to non-human animals mean that he reached unacceptably speciesist conclusions? This second basis for thinking that Kant reaches unacceptably speciesist conclusions is not that he sets no moral requirements on human treatment of non-human animals, but that these requirements do not arise either out of a right or claim of non-human animals to be treated as ends in themselves, but are indirect duties. The personification principle excludes non-persons from the status of right holders to whom duties are owed. Those who think that non-human animals have such rights dispute this exclusion. However, the claim that non-humans have rights cannot be established by mere assertion— any more than the claim that rational natures have duties and rights could be.

Evidently it would be hard to extend or adapt Kant's argument to show that rational natures have absolute and unconditional worth to fit the case of non-human animals, because it derives the moral status of humans from their capacities as rational natures.[10] If non-human animals are not agents, and have no duties, it will be hard to find a Kantian argument to show that they have rights, or that they are ends in themselves. The problem is one of burden of proof. Nothing in Kant's argument demonstrates that non-rational natures are not ends in themselves: but nothing shows that they are, and nothing suggests how it could be shown. It is wholly unclear how the argument for rational natures being ends in themselves could be extended to non-rational natures.

Given this situation it is not surprising that Kant concludes that there are no duties *to* non-human animals; it is perhaps more surprising that his conclusions are not more thoroughly speciesist,

10. See the discussion of *arbitria libera* as contrasted with *arbitria bruta*, *MS* 6: 213–4.

and that he views decent treatment of non-human animals as an indirect duty. It would evidently be implausible to view it as an indirect aspect of duties to seek others' happiness. By elimination Kant is left arguing that decent treatment of non-human animals contributes to our self improvement, and that without it we may become hard or callous to suffering in other humans. In taking up this line of thought Kant draws on the same considerations that have been crucial to many who urge the moral claims of non-human animals from other, including utilitarian, perspectives: the sympathy which we often feel to non-human but sentient animals.

The fact that Kant holds some substantive views about the importance of treating non-human animals decently suggests that, despite his rejection of the thought that they could be ends in themselves, he in fact seeks to mitigate the implications of the personification principle. It is true that he denies that non-human animals have rights (*MS* 6: 241), or that they can bind us to any duties, and that he never regards them as ends in themselves. Nevertheless, in allowing that harming non-human animals is an *indirect* violation of duties to humanity Kant endorses more or less the range of ethical concern for non-human animals that more traditional utilitarians allowed: welfare but not rights. The proximity of his substantive conclusions to those of utilitarians are easily missed because many contemporary utilitarians insist that decency to non-human animals requires more than Kant argues for: it should be more closely modelled on human welfare, and in particular non-human animals should not be farmed, killed or eaten. Earlier utilitarians might not have found Kant's substantive views on the treatment of non-human animals either unfamiliar or wholly inadequate.

The fact that there are indirect duties from which non-human animals ought to benefit is not a trivial protection. For Kant indirect duties matter: they are real duties that bind all who are capable of having duties. The objection that one may have to his position on non-human animals must then be not so much that agents are not required to have regard to them, but that the basis for these duties is not any right or claim of the non-human animal. This objection would be convincing if its proponents could show that non-human animals have fundamental (moral, natural) rights, and so that Kant was mistaken in thinking that human duties to

non-human animals are only indirect duties. However, the burden of proof on those who think that non-human animals have such rights is severe. Kant found it hard enough to show that interacting rational natures must regard one another as having absolute and unconditional worth, so must treat one another not as mere means but as ends in themselves, so have duties to one another, and rights against one another. A corresponding argument to show that animals who are not agents must also be regarded as having unconditional worth, and should have rights without duties, would be even harder to construct, and would have to use an entirely non-Kantian approach to reach conclusions that mirror Kant's conclusions about rational natures.

Alternative ways of trying to show that non-human animals, even if not ends in themselves, still have rights are also demanding. All too often claims that there are animal rights look plausible only because the thought that non-human animals may have *positive* rights is entirely plausible: but this neither Kant nor utilitarianism nor any other account of ethics need dispute.[11] The elusive argument would need to show that non-human animals have, if not all the moral (natural, fundamental) rights that humans have, at least some of these rights and so that obligation bearers—humans—owe them at least some direct duties.

Typical arguments about the moral standing of non-human animals are much less ambitious. Many of them do not aim to show that non-human animals are ends in themselves, or even that they have moral rights, but only that they are sufficiently like human animals to have a somewhat analogous status. Appeals to analogy have well known strengths and weaknesses. Where the analogies are good, an argument may look quite convincing: for example the Great Apes have many fragments of the forms of rationality that we find in humans,[12] so we should accord them the same protection that we accord humans with analogous fragments of rationality, and should think that in doing so we are fulfilling duties to them. It is less clear that we can attribute fragments of rationality to all non-human animals who have desires, sentience and some capacities to initiate action; and indeed many champions of the

11. See Onora O'Neill, 'Environmental Values, Anthropocentrism and Speciesism', in *Environmental Values*, 6, 1997, pp 127–42, esp p 132.

12. Peter Singer and Paola Cavalieri, *The Great Ape Project*, Fourth Estate, London, 1993.

moral claims of non-human animals seek not to show that they are agents as humans are, but to simply emphasize the significance of their sentience.[13] Of course, those who view sentience as the basis of moral standing do not generally take it that all sentient beings are ends in themselves, or of absolute worth; many of them do not claim that sentient beings have rights.

The problem with extending the scope of moral concern to non-human animals is not that there are no or few analogies between human and non-human animals: it is that there are also so many areas in which analogies fail. Abilities to communicate, to transmit cultures, to develop technologies, to represent the past and the future are found (if at all) in very weak forms in all non-human species, and are absent in the vast majority of non-human species. Many, but not all, of the advocates of concern for non-human animals accept that the case for duties to non-human animals will vary with species, and few expect to show that analogical reasoning can establish much in the way of duties to, let alone rights for, species with little resemblance to humans. As analogies with humans weaken, as sentience rather than fragments of rationality are viewed as the analogous feature, as sentience itself fades or takes forms remote from human sentience, it is likely that non-Kantian approaches to moral concern for non-human animals will also have to regard certain duties to non-human animals as indirect duties. Even if there would be advantages in showing that some duties to non-human animals are direct duties, owed in virtue of moral standing and rights which those non-human animals have, this position may be inaccessible; even if it were accessible, indirect duties to non-human animals might still be important.

These issues may matter less than some friends of the non-human world fear. An approach which, like Kant's, emphasizes indirect duties may even have some advantages over approaches which emphasize the rights of non-human animals. An emphasis on animal rights is in effect an emphasis on a form of individualism that is not restricted to humans, and is not always hospitable to broader ethical claims about action that affects the environment. As has often been noted, concern to preserve all (sentient) animals, or to accord all of them rights, may be blind or even inimical to

13. Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, London, Jonathan Cape, 1976 gave great impetus to recent uses of this type of argument.

the importance of preserving other features or aspects of the environment such as species, habitats, or biological diversity, whose preservation may require action which kills or harms individual non-human animals, such as predators or parasites, or members of a successful species who are crowding out others. Yet there is little prospect of taking account of these concerns by showing, for example, that subspecies or biodiversity, or rivers and forests, have rights. In the end, positions in ethics that allow for duties of any sort will either have to take indirect duties seriously, or will overlook the importance of dispersed features of the biosphere such as habitats or food-chains, or of abstract features such as species and genetic diversity, or of inanimate parts of nature such as the gulf stream or the ozone layer, as well as the importance of what Wood refers to as 'the natural environment as a whole' (AW 202). Indirect duties must be part of any environmentally sensitive ethics.

Wood is, I think, right when he speaks of Kant's ethics as demanding that we see nature as a whole as a teleological system. However, a focus on indirect duties offers another, perhaps humbler, way of filling out the appropriate relations between the human and non-human worlds. Natural systems are the material basis for all human and non-human life, for human production and for human culture: if then we have duties not to destroy but to sustain one another, and indirect duties with regard to non-human animals, these will often have to be expressed yet more indirectly in efforts to establish and sustain productive ways of life, clean waters, fertile soils, non-polluting technologies and stable habitats for human and non-human animals, as well as preserving biodiversity.[14] These additional indirect duties form a system with perfect and imperfect duties to self and to others, and with other indirect duties. This way of extending a measure of moral concern to aspects of the natural order may strike some as inadequate, whether because it does not accord non-human animals fundamental rights, or because it does not explicitly make sentience the sole ground of moral standing. However it has, as Wood notes, the advantage that it provides a route for taking account not only of individual non-human animals but of natural systems.

14. O'Neill *Towards Justice and Virtue*, Chs 6 and 7.

IV

Some Conclusions. Moral reasoning, I have argued, is *necessarily anthropocentric*. It can be done and understood, accepted and rejected only by those with more or less human capacities to act—including, if such there be, rational aliens or non-human rational species of this earth. The fact that some form of anthropocentrism is necessary for all practical and moral reasoning, does not by itself entail that logocentrism, in Wood's sense of the term, is necessary for all moral reasoning. Logocentrism combines anthropocentrism (of a specific variety) with the claim that 'rational nature, and it alone, has absolute and unconditional value'. Anthropocentrism does not incorporate any substantive view about value, and is common ground for a large range of moral theories as well as for moral sceptics, nihilists and egoists, who defend no substantive account of moral value, but accept that there are forms of practical reasoning.

What is distinctive about Kant's ethics is the argument from (his version of) anthropocentrism, combined with the assumption that rational agents are the recipients of one another's action, to the central logocentric claim that agents must view one another as ends in themselves and so as having absolute and unconditional value. It is this thought that provides the basis for the Formula of Humanity and so for an account of direct and indirect human duties, including indirect duties with regard to non-human animals. This position can, as Wood argues, be extended at the margins to allow for direct duties to those with fragments of rationality, or with incipient rationality. However, since it also grounds at least some indirect duties with regard to a wider range of sentient animals, to whom we have attitudes and responses like those we have to humans, and other indirect duties that extend to abstract and dispersed aspects of the natural order, Kant's position is likely to lead to wider-than-human, but not indefinitely wide, view of the objects of moral concern. His position may be speciesist up to a point: it requires action that takes account of difference of species. It does not establish that non-rational beings of any species have rights, or that rational beings have direct duties to them. But Kant's position is not a straight and simple form of human chauvinism. No doubt there are other imaginable ethical positions whose view on the scope of ethical concern and the

standing of non-human animals provides a wider, although probably not a complete, block to speciesist conclusions. What stands in the way of their acceptance is the continued lack of the necessary arguments.