

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## KANT ON PRACTICAL LIFE

Kant's practical philosophy comprehends a diverse group of his writings on ethics, politics, law, religion, and the philosophy of history and culture. Kristi E. Sweet demonstrates the unity and interdependence of these writings by showing how they take as their animating principle the human desire for what Kant calls the unconditioned – understood in the context of his practical thought as human freedom. She traces the relationship between this desire for freedom and the multiple forms of finitude that confront human beings in different aspects of practical life. She also stresses the interdependence of the pursuit of individual moral goodness and the formation of community through the state, religion, culture, and history. This study of Kant's approach to practical life discovers that doing our duty, itself the realization of our individual freedom, requires that we set for ourselves and pursue a whole constellation of social, political, and other communal ends.

KRISTI E. SWEET is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Texas A&M University. In addition to research on Kant's practical philosophy, she has also published on Kant's aesthetics. Her articles have appeared in journals including *Kantian Review*, *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, and *Idealistic Studies*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

# KANT ON PRACTICAL LIFE

*From Duty to History*

KRISTI E. SWEET



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History  
 Kristi E. Sweet  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

**CAMBRIDGE**  
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107037236](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107037236)

© Kristi E. Sweet 2013

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2013

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Sweet, Kristi E., 1976–

Kant on practical life : from duty to history / Kristi E. Sweet.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-03723-6 (hardback)

1. Kant, Immanuel, 1724–1804. I. Title.

B2798.S95 2013

193–dc23 2013011224

ISBN 978-1-107-03723-6 Hardback

Additional resources for this publication at [www.cambridge.org/sweet](http://www.cambridge.org/sweet)

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

*For Adriaan Peperzak and Ted George*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

## *Contents*

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	x
Introduction	i
1 Freedom of the self as such: the good will, duty, and moral feeling	36
2 Freedom of the self over time: virtue	75
3 Freedom of the self and the moral world: the highest good	105
4 Enacting the moral world: founding and promoting a civil condition	143
5 Enacting the moral world: joining the ethical community	167
6 Human finitude undone: culture and history	184
Conclusion: practical reason's 'peculiar fate'	206
<i>Bibliography</i>	213
<i>Index</i>	219

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## *Acknowledgments*

I would like to extend my sincere and humble gratitude to the many friends and colleagues who supported me in my efforts to complete this manuscript. Adriaan Peperzak offered unwavering guidance, support, and orientation in the formative stages of the project and throughout. I am deeply appreciative of the uncountable hours he spent teaching me Kant, challenging me, and demonstrating real concern for my growth as a scholar and as a person. I am grateful to call him a colleague and a friend. Andrew Cutrofello and Victoria Wike gave incisive feedback on the project in its incipient stages and this work bears the marks of their influences as well. Many people shepherded me through the process both personally and professionally; this project benefitted immensely from conversations with each of them: Maria Acosta, Rudolf Makkreel, Jennifer Mensch, Carlos Patarroyo, Dennis Schmidt, and Richard Velkley. I also owe a debt to numerous colleagues at Texas A&M, who have been generous with their time, mentorship, and support: Scott Austin, Dan Conway, Lisa Ellis, Stefanie Harris, Claire Katz, Mike LeBuffe, Colleen Murphy, Linda Radzik, and Apostolos Vasilakis. I am especially fortunate to have found the friendship of John and Patricia McDermott, whose steady and consistent encouragement buoyed me through much of the project. The two readers for Cambridge University Press each offered observations and criticisms of the book that served to improve and strengthen it. Deborah Strehle was a thoughtful and gifted copy-editor and indexer. I would also like to thank The Glasscock Center for Humanities Research, which provided support for the project. Finally, I could not have completed the book without the warmth, attention, and care of my husband, Ted George. His philosophical gifts are matched only by the generosity and strength of his character.

There are two sections of the book that contain material published earlier. In Chapter 4, pp. [160–64] appear as pp. 88–90 in “Philosophy and the Public Sphere: Kant on Moral Education and Political Critique,”

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History  
Kristi E. Sweet  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

*Acknowledgments*

ix

*Idealistic Studies*, 41, nos. 1 and 2 (2011): 83–94. In Chapter 6, pp. [186–93] appear as pp. 128–34 in “Kant and the Culture of Discipline: Rethinking the Nature of Nature,” *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 15, no. 1 (2010): 121–38.

## *Abbreviations*

### CITATIONS

The works of Immanuel Kant are cited according to volume:page number in the Akademie Edition of his writings: Immanuel Kant, *Kants gesammelte Schriften, herausgegeben von der Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 29 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902–). Quotations in English are all from the Cambridge Edition: Immanuel Kant, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992–). Below is listed the system of abbreviations I have used for the different texts, followed by the volume number of the Akademie (AA) collection in which the text is located. Following this is the title of the text in English along with the Cambridge volume that includes the translated text.

Br	<i>Briefe</i> (AA 10–13) <i>Correspondence</i>
G	<i>Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten</i> (AA 4) <i>Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals</i> , in <i>Practical Philosophy</i>
IaG	<i>Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht</i> (AA 8) “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim,” in <i>Anthropology, History, and Education</i>
KpV	<i>Kritik der praktischen Vernunft</i> (AA 5) <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> , in <i>Practical Philosophy</i>
KrV	<i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i> (cited by A/B pagination) <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
KU	<i>Kritik der Urteilskraft</i> (AA 5) <i>Critique of the Power of Judgment</i>
MAM	<i>Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschheitsgeschichte</i> (AA 8) “Conjectural Beginning of Human History,” in <i>Anthropology, History, and Education</i>

*List of abbreviations*

xi

- MS *Die Metaphysik der Sitten* (AA 6)  
*The Metaphysics of Morals*, in *Practical Philosophy*
- Päd *Pädagogik* (AA 9)  
*Lectures on Pedagogy*, in *Anthropology, History, and Education*
- R *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft* (AA 6)  
*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, in *Religion and Rational Theology*
- Refl *Reflexion* (AA 14–19)  
*Notes and Fragments*
- SF *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (AA 7)  
 “Conflict of the Faculties,” in *Religion and Rational Theology*
- TP *Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, taugt aber nicht für die Praxis* (AA 8)  
 “On the Common Saying: That may be correct in theory but it is of no use in practice,” in *Practical Philosophy*
- ÜE *Über eine Entdeckung, nach der alle neue Kritik der reinen Vernunft durch eine ältere entbehrlich gemacht werden soll* (AA 8)  
 “On a Discovery Whereby Any New Critique of Pure Reason is to Be Made Superfluous by an Older One,” in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*
- VE *Vorlesung über Ethik* (AA 27)  
*Lectures on Ethics*
- VT *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie* (AA 8)  
 “On a Recently Prominent Tone of Superiority in Philosophy,” in *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*
- WA *Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?* (AA 8)  
 “An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?” in *Practical Philosophy*
- WDO *Was heißt sich im Denken orientieren?* (AA 8)  
 “What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?” in *Religion and Rational Theology*
- ZeF *Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf* (AA 8)  
*Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project*, in *Practical Philosophy*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-03723-6 - Kant on Practical Life: From Duty to History

Kristi E. Sweet

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---