Kant’s Anatomy of Evil

Kant infamously claimed that all human beings, without exception, are evil by nature. This collection of essays critically examines and elucidates what he must have meant by this indictment. It shows the role which evil plays in his overall philosophical project and analyzes its relation to individual autonomy. Furthermore, it explores the relevance of Kant’s views for understanding contemporary issues such as crimes against humanity and moral reconstruction. Leading scholars in the field engage a wide range of sources from which a distinctly Kantian theory of evil emerges, both subtle and robust, and capable of shedding light on the complex dynamics of human immorality.

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Abbreviations

Writings of Immanuel Kant are cited by volume and page number of the Akademie Edition: *Immanuel Kants gesammelte Schriften* [Ak.], Ausgabe der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1902–). Unless otherwise indicated, the English translations are from the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Ca.) (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992–). The following abbreviations are used throughout the book:

- **EF** *Zum ewigen Frieden: Ein philosophischer Entwurf* (1795), Ak. 8
  *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project*, Ca. Practical Philosophy

- **G** *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785), Ak. 4
  *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Ca. Practical Philosophy

- **I** *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht* (1784), Ak. 8
  *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim*, Ca. Anthropology, History, and Education

- **KpV** *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788), Ak. 5
  *Critique of Practical Reason*, Ca. Practical Philosophy

- **KrV** *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1781, 1787); cited by A/B pagination
  *Critique of Pure Reason*, Ca. Critique of Pure Reason

- **KU** *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), Ak. 5
  *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Ca. Critique of the Power of Judgment

- **MA** *Mutmaßlicher Anfang der Menschengeschichte* (1786), Ak. 8
Abbreviations

Conjectural Beginning of Human History, Ca. Anthropology, History, and Education

MS Metaphysik der Sitten (1797–8), Ak. 6
Metaphysics of Morals, Ca. Practical Philosophy

MVT Über das Mißlingen aller philosophischen Versuche in der Theodicee (1791), Ak. 8
On the Miscarriage of All Philosophical Trials in Theodicy, Ca. Religion and Rational Theology

O Was heißt: Sich im Denken orientieren? (1786), Ak. 8
What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?, Ca. Religion and Rational Theology

P Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können (1783), Ak. 4
Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science, Ca. Theoretical Philosophy after 1781

R Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft (1793–4), Ak. 6
Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason, Ca. Religion and Rational Theology

SF Streit der Fakultäten (1798), Ak. 7
Conflict of the Faculties, Ca. Religion and Rational Theology

TP Über den Gemeinspruch: Das mag in der Theorie richtig sein, tauft aber nicht für die Praxis (1793), Ak. 8
On the Common Saying: That May Be Correct in Theory But It Is of No Use in Practice, Ca. Practical Philosophy

VA Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht (1798), Ak. 7
Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, Ca. Anthropology, History, and Education

Lectures on Anthropology, Ca. Lectures on Anthropology

VE Vorlesungen über Ethik, Ak. 27
Lectures on Ethics, Ca. Lectures on Ethics

VpR Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre, Ak. 28
Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion, Ca. Rational Religion and Theology

WA Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? (1784), Ak. 8
An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?, Ca. Practical Philosophy