THE GENESIS OF MORAL MACHINES:
ON MAKING ROBOTS IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

KANTIAN AND NON-KANTIAN “AGENTS”

We can discern three types of amoral beings in Kant’s ethical philosophy (B1 - B3 below), one kind of moral being (B4), the true moral agent, and one kind of immoral being (B5), for five kinds in all:

B1) beings that are driven solely by inclination, such as animals.

B2) beings that act solely out of reason and, therefore, duty, such as divine intellects.

B3) beings so constituted that their inclinations always accord with duty, such as perfect human beings.

B4) beings with inclinations that, at least some of the time, disagree with duty, but who nonetheless follow the dictates of duty.

B5) beings with inclinations that, at least some of the time, disagree with duty, but who do what they want without regard for duty.

There is also the important modification to B4 above that does not appear in Kant’s ethical philosophy.

B4’) beings with inclinations that, at least some of the time, disagree with duty, but who nonetheless follow the dictates of duty, even though it is possible for them not to do so.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Assuming the role of God in the Adam and Eve story for a moment, what justification is there for creating human beings to be morally responsible creatures?

Is the gift (?) of free will sufficient to justify the evil that it has caused in the history of humanity?

On the platform here presented, a person can be good only if they can be tempted to be bad. Is this true or false?

“Verily, I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no claws” – Nietzsche.

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