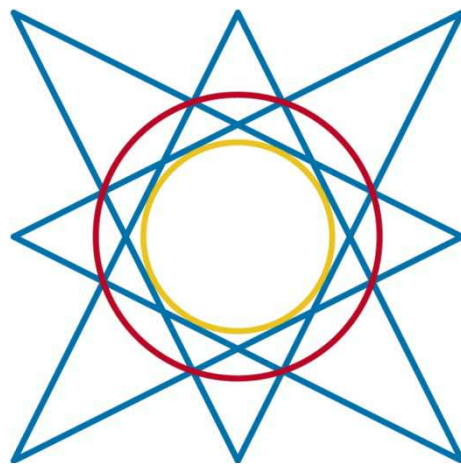


Wilhelm K. Essler

Virtue in Dignity
Wert in Würde

*Réunion de l'Institut International de Philosophie
Pékin Université, 16 septembre 2015*

Beijing
2015



*Meinem Kollegen
Jürgen Habermas
gewidmet
in Dankbarkeit und Hochachtung*

Wilhelm K. Essler

Virtue in Dignity

The concept of freedom of one's mind and of the dignity of such a state of freedom, as well as the benefits which are gained by sheltering or protecting someone who realized this freedom as his permanent property, was surely well-known in the *Orient* long before the life-time of Buddha Śākyamuni (563-483) as well as before the life-time of Kōng Fū Zǐ (551-479).¹ But as far as I know, these conceptions of the dignity and nobility of someone, who realized and fulfilled this dignity and nobility, did not come down to us from earlier periods.

According to these conceptions, someone is lacking mental liberty if –and only if– he is subdued by the taints of his mind; and he remains subdued by these taints and remains –so to speak– a prisoner of his taints as long as he does not succeed to gain a permanently perfect knowledge concerning the structure of his mental composition, esp., as long as this knowledge is not strong enough in order to permanently rein in his mind with nothing else than just his own mind's power.

¹ The ancient Chinese concept: "jūnzǐ" seems to correspond to the ancient Indian concept: "arhat", which is synonymously related to the German concept: "Ehrwürdiger" and which mostly is translated into English as "Venerable One".

Since in Buddhism the Dharma has priority to the Buddha and to the Saṃgha, it is to be assumed that in the view of the Buddha the dignity of an Arhat is derived from the dignity of the Dharma, since the Arhat realized and perfected this Dharma.

I am convinced –without being able to present proofs concerning this conviction– that Kōng Fū Zǐ, too, regarded the Noble State to be realized as being of primary nobility, and that a Noble One –i.e.: a jūnzǐ– is someone who either already gained this goal of Nobility or who at least entered the finishing line of that goal, so that he may be regarded as a Noble One because this goal is a noble goal.

Therefore, according to these conceptions, someone is maintaining mental freedom if –and only if– he has abandoned his taints completely and forever. And he will accomplish this state of mind by perfecting his insight into the frame of the situation of his own mind as well as into the mental situations of the other sentient beings, and by safekeeping and protecting this firm insight by means of establishing an indestructible awareness of his mind concerning the state his mind.²

Such a state of mind is a state of dignity; therefore, someone who gained this state of mind gained this state of dignity. And since such a state is much more superior and much more divine than the states of the several gods –i.e.: the personifications of physical energies and of mental powers, which per se are un-free–, it works again for the benefit of the inhabitants of any sphere or realm to welcome and to safeguard among them such a person of dignity –such a sage, in Kant’s word: such a saint– among them and to shelter him according to their abilities.

On the other hand, in the *Occident* –as far as the respective reports came to us, since only fragments of the respective doctrines of the Pre-Socratic philosophers, of Sōkrátēs, and of the Socratic philosophers are available to us– the doctrine of dignity was not discussed during the period of Ancient Greek philosophies:

- * Herákleitōs knew and maintained the distinction between knowledge and wisdom [≈ noūs, = insight, ≈ reason].
- * Pythagóras was aware of the worth of each sentient being, independently of the respective shape of their bodies.
- * Anaxagóras regarded the universal reason [= noūs], which some sentient beings are participating in to different extents, as something which is not worldly but divine, therefore not effected in any manner.
- * Sōkrátēs, a former disciple of Anaxagóras, regarded virtue all in all as being a divine present to sentient beings.

² Buddha Śākyamuni described the awareness concerning his mindfulness [concerning his attention to something] by this simile: „Gleichwie Einer einen Anderen betrachten möchte –der Stehende einen Sitzenden, der Sitzende einen Liegenden, [der Liegende etwa eine Blume]– ebenso auch mag [der Jünger] den Gegenstand der Rückblicks-Erkenntnis gut festhalten, ihn gut im Geist erwägen, ihn mit Weisheit klar durchdringen.“ [AN 529]

Kōng Fū Zǐ described reflecting knowledge by: „Zu wissen, was man [von etwas] weiß, und zu wissen, was man tut, das ist Wissen“; and he added: „Der Kern des Wissens besteht darin, das nun Erkannte sodann auch anzuwenden.“

* And Aristotéles, following in that respect Anaxagóras, regarded this *noûs* – i.e.: reason– as being divine, while looking at the *psyché*–i.e.: the mind in all of its other respects– as something worldly, which starts to develop with the birth of a sentient being and which decays when this being passes away.

Since Aristotéles obviously never openly discussed the topic of dignity, be it in respect to reason or be it in respect to morality in general and moral laws in particular, we seem to be justified to make the assumption that issues of this kind were never really addressed by him.

Within the limit of our historical knowledge, the ancient Roman nobleman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43) was the first Western philosopher who investigated and discussed the concept of *dignitas*.³ As an expression, “*dignitas*” was used in Ancient Rome at least since the dictator Sulla in the sense of “dignity of an office” and, derived from it, in the sense of “dignity of a holder of an office”.⁴

But Cicero added an additional layer of meaning to this political term. These two interrelated concepts, denoted both by “*dignitas*”, are:

- The dignity concerning one’s position in society, namely: being born into the estate of a dignified clan which belongs to an upper caste of the Roman society; having developed qualities and abilities of body and mind by using and applying the respective means cultivated within that social realm; and using and applying these qualities and abilities either to enrich the welfare of one’s social environment, as opposed to disregarding this welfare or even destroying and ruining it.
 - The dignity concerning the individual, i.e.: the society’s member, but understood in the sense of: being born and living as a human being, thereby possessing reason in contrast to animals.

³ These ideas were mainly developed by Cicero in his books “*De re publica*” and “*De officiis*”.

NB: In an ostensible way he addressed his arguments to his son Marcus, suggesting thereby that he wrote these two books in order to educate him.

But in my view, such a behaviour is by far not the most effective strategy concerning the education of one’s own children.

Therefore, I strongly suspect that the name “Marcus” is used by Cicero in “*De officiis*” as a fictive device, which in fact was meant to refer to Gaius Julius Caesar, at that period the new dictator of Rome.

⁴ The crime of insulting of an official is a remainder of this cruel dictator.

In the former meaning, a person's dignity, which is established and gained by some political office and by accumulating political power within one's society, may increase, and may remain at its former level, and may decrease. Regarding the usual view of man, no non-human sentient beings but only human beings may get and may increase or may lose dignity, i.e.: solely members of mankind.⁵

In the latter perspective, any human being's dignity is not related to his or her social standing; for it is a consequence of simply being born among man:⁶

(a) The dignity of universal reason [\approx *noûs*] is not derived from some other kind of dignity.⁷ Therefore, it is not born, and it will not die; and therefore, too, it does neither increase nor decrease.

(b) A human being –or, to be precise in the sense of Aristotéles: a sentient being which is equipped with some extent of intelligence [\approx *noûs*]– participates to some extent in universal reason; and therefore, this being's dignity is –in most cases: to some limited part– derived from the former one. But to what extent this derived dignity flourishes in each single sentient being does not depend on reason but on the respective individual, including his physical conditions, his direct and indirect education, and his interests and efforts. Any such intelligent sentient being may orientate his or her mind [\approx *psyché*] to reason [\approx *noûs*]. From the point of view of universal reason, there need not be any defect or any condition accompanied by discriminations, as far as the presence of universal reason in each single individual is concerned; but from the limited viewpoint of the particular individual himself or herself, such defects and conditions accompanied by discriminations are to be observed, in many cases at least.

(c) Any such intelligent sentient being will act at some time with his or her mind, at some time –in addition to that– by his or her speech, and again –in addition to that– by his or her physical body, according to the

⁵ One of the few exceptions may be, e.g., the geese of the Capitol who –at a time when the city was under attack– announced the invasion of enemies and saved Rome in that way.

⁶ What follows just now is my attempt to reconstruct Cicero's doctrine in a few words, thereby presupposing that he was familiar with the Greek concepts "*psyché*" and "*noûs*" esp. as they were used by Aristotéles.

In that way of reconstructing his doctrine, the distinction of *possessing* and *using* belongs to my interpretation

⁷ Obviously, I am introducing here conceptions of Kant.

degree of universal reason with which he or she is equipped; and sometimes this may happen in accordance with this universal reason which the acting being is participating in.

And this entails, as far as the respective degree of dignity is concerned, these conclusions as well as other consequences which may be derived from them:

(a') The dignity of universal reason [\approx noûs] is beyond any measure: It is unlimited; and in this sense, it is infinite.

(b') The dignity of any sentient being is limited according to the extent in which his or her mind participates in that universal –theoretical as well as practical– reason; and it then is limited. As long as this participation is defective and conditioned accompanied by discriminations and therefore of finite extent, the respective dignity is of finite degree, too; and the increasing as well as decreasing degree of the individual's dignity depends on the amount of the respective extent of its participation in universal reason.

(c') The different quantities of dignity of these actions of that intelligent sentient being are then limited, too, in accordance respectively with the limited share of reason which the being is participating in.

By attempting to interrelate the Aristotelian definition of a human being with the Ciceronian doctrine of dignity of man, the following results are obtained:

- The former mundane sense of dignity is established by acts within the social environment, to which the respective individual belongs, e.g.: by being appointed to some office of the government, by being honoured by the government, and so on.
 - The latter philosophical sense of dignity, however, does not depend on such acts of the individual's society but –according to Cicero– solely on the human being in question, or rather – according to Aristotélēs– on the sentient being's participating in universal reason.

But then the question arises how to determine the distinction between human beings and other sentient beings, i.e.: how to define this concept of a human being in contrast to the concept of an animal, how to state definitions for the expressions “human being” and “animal”:

Up to now, two kinds of approaches seem to be available, namely: a definition of Plátōn-likeness [= Platonic similarity, = Pl-Df], which re-

gards the bodily attributes of such a being,⁸ and a definition of Aristotéles-likeness [= Aristotelian similarity, = Ar-Df], which emphasizes the mental characteristics of sentient beings:⁹

Pl-Df:

“A human being is a sentient being with two legs and broad fingernails but without feathers”

Ar-Df:

“A human being is a sentient being which is able to lead his or her mind by –theoretical as well as by practical– reasoning”¹⁰

Someone who regards *both* definitions to be true and valid then has to regard also its obvious conclusion [= Concl] to be true and valid, namely:

Concl:

“A sentient being is able to lead his or her mind by reasoning if –and only if– he or she has two legs and broad fingernails and no feathers”

It seems to me that also nowadays almost all of the people of jurisprudence tacitly accept this strange conclusion,¹¹ in spite of what since half of a century was reported by behaviour scientists concerning the capabilities of mind and reason of animals.

And it seems to me that even nowadays the majority of philosophers believe in this conclusion.¹²

⁸ Some modern definition, whose definiens recurs to chromosomes or even to genes, is to be regarded as a bodily explanation of human beings, therefore as a definition of Plátōn-likeness. Another definition was used some months ago by Joachim Gauck, the current president of Germany, so to speak: “Mensch ist, wer ein menschliches Antlitz trägt”. But this, too, may be understood either according to bodily respects or to mental respects of intelligent sentient beings:

- According to bodily attributes, men whose face was deformed by torture do no longer wear a human face, while great mass murderers like Alexander and Caesar and Hitler did wear human faces.

- In contrast, with regard to the mental characteristics, men whose face was deformed by torture do wear a human face, while great mass murderers like Alexander and Caesar and Hitler did no longer wear human faces.

⁹ The following two definitions may be varied.

¹⁰ This is meant by Aristotéles in the sense that such a sentient being is able to engage planning-activities, to use language, and to act according to his or her purposes.

¹¹ Perhaps in Switzerland the lawyers in their majority do not behave in that way.

¹² And the philosophers should carefully read the chapter “On the reason of animals” of “A Treatise of Human Nature” of David Hume (1711-1776).

In his youth, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was educated in the tradition of Pietistic Christianity. And according to Christian religions – these thereby founding themselves upon the Mosaical paradigm of religion – not animals but solely members of mankind are in God’s own likeness; and these ones solely received God’s own breath.¹³

We do not know in detail what books were read by Kant during his academic education. But with respect to the topic of dignity, we may assume that he studied texts of Giovanni Pico (1463-1494), born at Mirandola, and of Samuel Pufendorf (1632-1694), besides other ones.

We know that Pico della Mirandola studied texts of Abū I-Walīd Muhammad Ibn Rušd alias Averoes (1126-1198), who taught at Sevilla at Southern Spain. But I do not know which parts of Islamic Philosophy were transmitted to Pico. In any case, Pico reformulated the “Genesis” of the Holy Bible, reporting thereby that God created the animals as being completely determined by causal laws and being thus without any free will; and –in contrast– he created the first man with unlimited free will so that this first human being –as well as all of his successors– are able to determine everything which concerns them.

Pufendorf summarized all these views, telling –so to speak– that every member of mankind is of highest dignity; for every single individual of it possesses a mind¹⁴ which –in contrast to animals– is open to guidance by the light of *understanding* [\approx *noūs* ?], by the ability of *judgment*, i.e.: of receiving knowledge, and by *free will*, i.e.: by the ability of forming his decision without thereby being misled by taints.

During his pre-critical period, Kant’s conception of moral philosophy was following the lines of the ethics of Aristotéles.

But from the time on when he started to finish the final chapter of his “*Critik der reinen Vernunft*” (A-1781) –his main work on Theoretical Philosophy–, he abandoned the Aristotelian approach; and he led his

But since about a quarter of a century, an increasing part of philosophers dealing with practical philosophy in the sense of bio-ethics regard non-micro animals as thinking sentient beings, whereby the thinking of these animals influences their moral behaviour.

¹³ Animals –at least the mammals among them– possess a very distinguished ability of smelling. Maybe because of this fact God hesitated to breath on them.

¹⁴ Pufendorf, the son of a protestant pastor, did not write “*Geist*” [\approx “mind”] but “*Seele*” [\approx “soul”]. And it may be assumed therefore that he believed that this soul –in spite of its being created– is nevertheless immortal.

It is unclear to me how he succeeded to combine consistently the respective views of Christianity on the one side and of Aristotéles on the other side.

investigations on Practical Philosophy to that one point, where an unconditioned and therefore unrestricted dignity may be discovered.¹⁵ His way of thinking concerning the fundamentals of philosophical ethics may be summed up as follows:

No human being who is to act in this or that way in some situation is able to overlook in advance every single circumstance of this situation, which may be of relevance concerning his actions; and, in addition, no human being is able to control any situation to such an extent as to fully exclude any disturbing interferences.

Therefore it may –and sometimes it really does– happen that the action of a human being –in spite of having been led by a good motivation– is led to a bad and unwelcome outcome. Therefore, concerning the quality of the individual's actions, the philosopher's view is to be focused not on the results of the individual's conduct but on his intentions, on the motivations which determine his intentions, in short: on his will.

A motivation which leads the actions of a human being is a good one if –and only if– this motivation is led not by his taints but by his reason [= Vernunft, ≈ *noûs*], requiring his insight into non-conditioned and non-restricted aims and purposes.

Furthermore, concerning theoretical as well as practical respects of reasoning, there exists exactly *one* reason, i.e.: at least one and at most one reason. Therefore, sentient beings which are intelligent –i.e.: which possess the ability to use their respective minds in the sense of reason–, are participating in this *one* reason, in this *noûs*. Of course, they may –and, in fact, they will– participate in it to different degrees and with different success:

The manner in which a person is managing his own mind may be in accordance and in harmony with reason or in discordance and in disharmony with it; this reasoning may be not narrowly restricted or nar-

¹⁵ Five weeks before I finished this essay, by chance I took notice of the essay: "Zur Würde des Menschen bei Kant" of Dietmar von der Pforten, see:

<http://www.rechtsphilosophie.uni-goettingen.de/ZurWuerdeDesMenschenBeiKant.pdf>

This essay analyses in a clear and perfect manner the slightly different but interconnected ways of Kant's employment of the expression "Würde" [= "dignitas"], especially with regard to "Menschheit" [= "humanitas"; and he –like me– regards Kant's concept of man as being connected to an Aristotelian sense and surely not to a Platonic one.

I allow myself now to be guided by his analysis, but –as I should confess– not by each and every of his conclusions.

rowly restricted; and it may be maintained uninterruptedly or with interruptions of different extents. But, nevertheless, it is always the same reason by which it is to be decided, how restricted and –nevertheless– in agreement one’s used reason is in relation to that one universal reason.

Pure –i.e.: apriorical– *theoretical* reasoning leads to categories and to principles associated with them, like the category of causality and the principle of causality. Such a principle is the *apriorical* form of every *empirical* causal law; i.e.: it is a necessary condition of them. But it does not imply such an empirical law; i.e.: under no circumstances it is to be regarded as a sufficient condition for them.

In the same way, pure –i.e.: apriorical– *practical* reasoning leads to the fundamental concepts of morality and to the respective general apriorical imperatives.

Hypothetical imperatives are implications; for they contain a genuine *if-then*-form, whereby its *if*-component states conditions and restrictions whose contents are of empirical kind.

The general form of them, however, is *not* restricted to such empirical conditions; and therefore this form is a pure –i.e.: an apriorical– form of reasoning in its practical respects. Therefore, such a *categorical* imperative does *not* contain any empirical *if*-components; it therefore neither depends on any specific person nor on any circumstances or conditions or situations where these acts are to be performed, nor on any specific person’s empirical background-knowledge, nor on the extent of any specific person’s participation in that one universal reason.

Since it is independent of all these empirical conditions, and since the imperative itself is not related to some empirical state, such a categorical imperative is *not* a *category* but an *Idee*, i.e.: a guiding idea, in practical respects: an idea of orientating one’s mind to thinking–speaking–doing according to correct hypothetical imperatives.

And since it is *the* form of *all* hypothetical imperatives, *this* general idea of *every* hypothetical imperative is the *one and only one* practical *Idee*. Therefore, this one *idea* is associated with *one and only one* categorical imperative, no matter how the respective ways of formulating may be chosen.¹⁶

¹⁶ However, in my view these different formulations given by Kant are by no means logically equivalent. Therefore, the meaning of “one and only one” is to be understood in a weakened sense at this point of his philosophizing.

Perhaps he did not succeed to place these different formulations on a scheme comparable to the scheme of the categories.

In fact, this categorical imperative was formulated almost simultaneously by Buddha Śākyamuni and by Kōng Fū Zǐ. And both thereby used not a technical jargon of their respective philosophical doctrine but ordinary everyday-language in order to be understood by their listeners.

But most probably the formulation of this rule of all moral laws is much older than two-and-a-half thousand years. In German language, this so-called *Golden Rule* is transmitted by the verse:

“Was du nicht willst, das man dir tu’,
das füg’ auch keinem Andern zu!”,

which may be rendered into English thus:

“Do unto others as you
would have others do unto you!”¹⁷

This universal obligation, which is expressed by that categorical imperative, is completely pure, which means especially: it is without any fragile constituents. And *this* feature of it entails nothing but its pure and complete and unrestricted and unconditioned *dignity*.

Any human being¹⁸ who internalized this way of thinking and speaking and acting in complete and stainless harmony with moral obligation –therefore, in Kant’s own word: a *Heiliger* [≈ a saint, a sage]¹⁹– will then, of course possess not only this obligation but also the dignity of this obligation.

Adding some semi-Kantian thoughts, I may continue as follows:

★ *Such a dignity* of a sage *is* inviolable: For no circumstance and no other individual –by creating demeaning circumstances like torture–

¹⁷ Centuries later, this *Golden Rule* was absorbed into the Christian Holy Scriptures, too. See Matt. 7:12.

¹⁸ I am completely sure that in his Practical Philosophy Kant understood the concept “human being” not in some Platonic manner but in an Aristotelian way, i.e.: not related to a sentient being’s physical characteristics but related to his or her mental possibilities.

¹⁹ Kant’s understanding of the German word: “Heiliger” is not easy to be translated into English; for it resonates with the Greek term: “Σωτήρ” [= “sōtēr”] as well as with the German concepts: “Heiland, Heil-Erreicht-Habender, Heil-Bringender”.

can violate it. And in fact, there were –and there still are– human beings who are imprisoned in concentration camps, but who maintained their dignity in spite of having been tortured by physical means and having been demeaned by psychological means: Such human beings²⁰ proved their dignity in death camps of former Nazi-Germany; and such human beings proved –and are still compelled to continue to prove– their dignity in detention camps of the United States of America.²¹

★ In accordance with the extent of any human being’s participating in reason [\approx *noûs*] in its practical respects –which means: not only regarding this participation in an abstract or purely intellectual way, but putting it into action by living accordingly, i.e.: having internalized it completely–, this being obtains and maintains his or her respective share of dignity. And this part of participation can be increased as well as decreased by the individual in question, in relation to the individual’s further behaviour.

★ But this restricted part of dignity of some intelligent sentient being cannot be violated by other ones but only by this individual herself resp. himself.

★ If, according to Plátōn, the concept of human being is understood solely in its physical respect, then there is no way to discover and to justify any kind of moral dignity, except, of course, that Cicero’s two variations of dignity which both depend on political reasons,²² i.e.: on political power including all kinds of gross and of subtle political intrigue and terror.

★ If, according to Aristotéles, the meaning of “dignity” is related not to the body of sentient beings but to their mental qualities, then it may

²⁰ Using an Aristotelian definition of “human being”, the extension of “human being” is not restricted to members of mankind but may also include animals, insofar as their thinking as well as their morality is a human one, i.e.: in accordance with humanity.

²¹ Of course, as far as the *quantity* of the number of victims is concerned, there is a huge difference, bringing down therefore a much bigger share of moral shame on Germany.

But –according to the Supreme Court’s interpreting the Basic Law [i.e.: the Federal Constitution] of present-day Germany– the dignities of persons whatsoever cannot be added and compared and must not be added and compared to that of another one.

On the other hand, concerning the *quality* of the respective establishers of such camps, there, too, exists an immeasurable difference. For the governments of the USA were –and still are– elected by the majority of the voters. However, the government of Nazi-Germany never received the majority of the German voters: neither by free elections before January 1933 nor by semi-free elections after January 1933.

By the way: According to my passport, I am a German; but according to my heart, I am a Czech.

²² The nowadays English expression “reason” is a delicate one!

happen –and it really does happen– that members of mankind possess less humanity –and therefore less dignity– than members of the animal kingdom.

It is my firm view that humanity as well as dignity are not attributes of one's body but of one's mind.²³

²³ About two weeks ago, Jürgen Habermas sent me his essay of “Das Konzept der Menschenwürde und die realistische Utopie der Menschenrechte”, written at 2010, wherein he analyzed human dignity in its philosophical as well as in its social and political respects.

Because of reasons of time, up to now I was not able to incorporate this most important contribution into my paper.

In any case, I am grateful to him for being able now to study the result of his investigation, concerning my further research!

Furthermore, I am grateful to Gabriele A. Bassett and to Michael Jekel for several suggestions they made after carefully reading an earlier draft of this essay!

Finally, concerning the following Post Script, I am grateful to William P. Franke who translated this text, which was written by me in German, into smooth British English!

From:

„Spiegel-Online (Wissenschaft)“ 19 June 2015: „Elefanten in Afrika“

„Spiegel-Online (Wissenschaft)“ 09 May 2015: „Elfenbein-Handel“



The only natural enemy of elephants is: man.
It is to be supposed that the killed elephant was the mother
of this elephant baby, which afterwards had to starve to death.

POST-SCRIPT

In the discussion that ensued upon this lecture, it was argued by the colleagues TU Weiming, KUÇURADI Ioanna, and CHANDEL Bhuvan as follows, recapitulating their arguments:

The concept of obligation –taken by itself, i.e.: without help from other powers of mind– is much too bland and much too undefined to be the driving force of moral action, and thereby to conduce to working with dignity and worth. Therefore the insight into conscientious action –true to one’s obligations– must be bound together and coalesce with the forces of feeling, above all those of joy and happiness; for these forces lend what is recognized as one’s duty the strength to press forward to the goal that reason has clearly discerned; and thus the dignity of the moral becomes the dignity of the morally acting agent. It would be wrong to consider the forces of feeling as in themselves and as such contrary to reason; they can –and they should!– rather be employed constantly as conformable to reason.

I agreed to their arguments which were recapitulated here –so to speak– in a nutshell; and I added:

Whoever –in Kant’s sense– has become a *Heiliger* [\approx a *sage* resp. a *saint*] will execute moral action with a cheerful and untroubled mind that is suffused with blessedness and bliss.

Whoever, by contrast has not yet reached this saintliness, this highest state of the spirit, will doubtless need to experience decisive quiet and undisturbed joy in order to be capable of morally motivated action: blessedness, precisely, that brings further moral action in thoughts, words, and acts into harmony with rationally measured and mediated duty; a blessedness that works in spirit from the background and that is not of itself extinguished but rather is first extinguished – and then quite abruptly– as when in the mind thoughts of doubtful moral worth arise, thoughts that thus from reason are not immediately recognized as such and therefore are extinguished.

Such action that is bound up with blessedness is related neither to utility nor to the social surroundings. Whoever, for example, brings an animal that has strayed out of its habitat and therefore is doomed to

quickly die back to its natural habitat has not aimed at any *exterior* – material, or social, or political – benefit for himself or his own. However, the *interior* benefit by contrast is considerable. It expresses itself in a long-enduring feeling of silent satisfaction, a satisfaction that is bound with dignity, in which nevertheless dignity does not tip over into haughtiness.

In exactly this sense, such a joy is *completely* distinct from *Schadenfreude* [\approx *malicious joy*] and from similar perverted forms of joy; it is in harmony with reason and with what is rationally pondered.

It is not exactly clear to me in all particulars why Kant in his *pre-critical* writings on morality emphasized Glückseligkeit [\approx *bliss* resp. *blessedness*] as actively working in action but then later in his *critical* writings pushed this factor aside.

★ One reason for him was surely that the state of bliss can be reached also by other means, for example, by abnormal attitudes of mind, or by ingestion of drugs, or by stimulation of particular places in the nervous system.

★ Another reason for him would be that although individual moral action is dependent on and co-determined by empirical factors, nevertheless the fundamental principles of moral action must not be conditioned or determined by any empirical circumstances whatever and therefore count as *apriori* binding duty; just as, on the other hand, there is no *apriori* demonstrable guarantee that action according to duty and thus with dignity will be accompanied by a feeling of bliss.

★ A further reason for him in this is to be found in the fact that the dignity of the moral principle, through the stripping away of everything subjective – and so precisely the feelings of bliss – permitted and aimed to prove the consummate moral intersubjectivity – in his words: objectivity – and therewith its not-conditioned, its unconditional, worth.

★ In addition it may be that the reflection dawned on him that the quantity – the extent, the degree – of feelings in general and of bliss in particular in such action need not be in advance – not *apriori* – correspondingly comprehensive and that it is often – depending on one's state of mind – nothing at all.

★ Perhaps he was guided here also by the reflection that there is no guarantee that the quality – the value of feeling – of intersubjectivity, and in *this* sense of objectivity, is lacking. So, just as *one* person cannot know what quality of color another person perceives in contemplating a green or a red object – and what color quality a red-green-blind person

perceives therein– even so the *one* does not know what the *other* experiences in terms of feelings in the execution of a morally comparable action.

Here in any case one can rightly object that neither the quality of color experience in the knowing of something colored nor the feeling of happiness in duty-bound and thus of worthy action impair or in any way could impair the intersubjectivity of knowing on the one hand and the intersubjectivity of acting on the other.

Fundamentally –and therefore I agree with the two previously given indications– the subjective in knowing as well as in acting is harmless *then*, if the subjectively performed knowing or subjectively performed acting therein can be proven to be intersubjectively valid. *Such* intersubjectively performed proof of validity then presupposes – in the sense of the reference– that the accompanying impressions and feelings in accord with reason rule, and even more, that they work on or exercise influence on reason.

I do not conceal that I largely but not completely associate myself with Kant the great philosopher.²⁴

A decisive point for me in which I deviate from his moral philosophy concerns my adherence to an Aristotelian-style determination of the concept “human being” in the context of ethical themes insofar as they fall under “Dignity–Duty–Right.”²⁵

For in the Platonic-style conception²⁶ criteria of such a conception in central places are applied which either the outer, material appear-

²⁴ In Asia there is a small temple dedicated to the four great sages of our earth, namely: Buddha Śākyamuni, KōngFūZǐ, Sokrátēs, Kant.

²⁵ In other contexts and particularly for purposes of everyday speech, I naturally use the expression “human being” in approximate agreement with the manner of use in my respective social environment, and thus apparently in correspondence with the Platonic-style concept.

²⁶ In our times, in academic circles, a Plato-style conceptual determination of “humanity” is increasingly determined not by the outward image of a living being but by the inner image, namely, chemically, in other words, by its chemical building blocks and their composition, and by the biological workings of this content and its material syntheses. As these building blocks have for decades been taken to be chromosomes, at present one estimates genes to be these components. Sooner or later molecules or atoms or quarks will be taken to determine the building blocks of living beings.

With what –*not* all too *arbitrarily* drawn *sharp*– boundary lines one will distinguish the present race of humans from the forefathers may remain a constantly controversial question. And which *sharp* boundary lines will distinguish the progeny from the present race of humans –those for whom we are the forefathers– remains in

ance of a presently existing species of living things, or the inner, material appearance of this species, divides from another. Albeit such criteria considered in a moral perspective are completely irrelevant, they will be produced to the end of elevating oneself over the living beings outside these boundary lines and esteeming and treating them as objects at the disposal of the living beings falling within these boundary lines.

Such boundary lines are completely irrelevant in a moral perspective, since they operate with chemical and physical concepts. And therefore is it not evident –however such a drawing of boundaries in detail might turn out– why such a so-described living being should be attributed [moral]²⁷ *dignity* and with [moral] dignity then [moral] duty, and with [moral] then moral right.

Limited in its field of application is every type of dignity [= *every* type of conceptual determination of the expression “dignity”] that is of extra-moral constitution; and limited in exactly this sense therefore is *such* a concept of “dignity.” *Unlimited* by contrast in its field of application is the type of dignity that comes from moral worth; and *unlimited* is therefore *such* a concept that accompanies implementations of the Golden Rule, or that relates to the *moral* aspect of humanity, *humanitas*.

A Platonic-style determination of the concept orients itself, roughly speaking, to the concept “humanity,” to the concept “human being,” and Aristotelian-style concept by contrast to the concept “humaneness,” or “being human.”

An Aristotle-style determination of the concept of “human being” refers, therefore, in order to make distinctions, centrally *not* to the *stuff*, to the *material*, but *rather* to the *spiritual*, to the *mental*; to the presence of sensory powers and their felt evaluations, and to the presence of powers of understanding together with their rational assess-

any case pure speculation, even if a speculation that must not be missing from a Platonic-style definition, if it is going to be clean.

Considered with precision, *all* Platonic-style definitions of the concept “human” of racist in nature. And they are ordered to an image of the living being at present that resembles more or less the one since the end of the last ice age and that by the end of the coming ice age will perhaps be extinct.

²⁷ Here and in what follows I employ the expression “dignity” constantly and exclusively in the sense of *moral* dignity and leave wholly out of account other uses of this expression, particularly in social and political contexts, for example, as in “in the dignity” of an office.

ments, however developed or limited such powers in the specific case may be.

Now certainly not all humans –in Plato’s sense, all wingless two-legged beings with broad finger nails– unlimited in their powers of sensation and consciousness, even without taking into consideration those that through diseases or injuries have lost the use of important parts of the nervous system. And contrariwise there are certain beasts that in, for example, reflection, are at least equal to very many humans, if not even superior.²⁸

The other limitations that concern extra-moral dignity are related to the social and political surroundings of the agent, of their acting in thought and speech and deed. In contrast, *these*, the limitations that concern the *moral* dignity of the agent, relating to the agent alone, namely to the extent of their participation in the *unlimited* dignity of moral principles as simplified into the *Golden Rule*.²⁹

²⁸ Whoever is intensely involved with cats or with dogs will without qualification agree with me on this. In general we can say:

★ Animals are able with their bodily as well as their linguistic behavior are able to deceive and thus to lie; they are capable of reflecting and deliberating to this end, even if they take less time for this than human do.

★ Animals understand much more of the language of humans than humans do of the language of animals. This is especially unmistakable concerning the language of dolphins.

★ The fact that animals are mostly at the stage of hunters and gathers concerning their methods of nutrition does not essentially differentiate them from humans in the present and is in a moral perspective irrelevant. Furthermore, it is not possible to predict which animal species will evolve in which directions after the next ice age.

★ It is not true that humans alone and not animals transmit their knowledge and experience to their progeny and they in turn to their own, and so on. Everyone can recognize this in the case of fish, in the behavior of fish in disparate parts of the sea in which there has not yet been any fishing and in comparison with the behavior of fish of the same race in the seas and ponds of the Mediterranean. For as long as animals have not yet come into contact with their chief enemy –with humans– they do not know the danger that this race represents for them.

★ And finally concerning social and moral behavior, there are animals endowed with reason –for example, great apes, elephants, and dolphins– who are completely equal to and often even superior to humans.

²⁹ Of course, one can understand it in a limited sense, namely, as limited to the human race, as in: “What you would not that another human being should do to you, do that to no other human being!” And one can draw this delimitation in even narrower terms, as racists of all types are accustomed to do.

Personally, I avoid lending such *limited* Golden Rules a worth exceeding this limitation and allowing them to attain through this worth to a higher dignity.

Whether one reveres a living being that participates in this unlimited manner in unlimited dignity as a saint –as Kant did– or rather as a sage, as I would prefer to say, is then question of considerable consequence.

A friend of wisdom –and thus precisely in the literal sense a *philosopher*– will direct his powers of consciousness, with activation of his forces of feeling, toward the not-to-be-missed goal of the speedy attainment of such wisdom.³⁰

³⁰ Not only warlords from time to time set out in the opposite direction on this path but also individual philosophy professors:

In the *Nazi Reich* Heidegger –as the only now published “Black Books” irrefutably prove– with regard to striving in the sense of a “friend of wisdom” made himself into a negative exemplar and thus represents in this sense the exact counter-example to Kant.

That he was inspired by Plato’s ideal of the working together of princes and philosophers may be firmly asserted without any further argument.

POSTSCRIPTUM

In der Diskussion, die sich an diesen Vortrag angeschlossen hat, ist von den Kollegen TU Weiming, KUÇURADI Ioanna und CHANDEL Bhuvan auf das Folgende hingewiesen worden:

Der Begriff der *Pflicht* ist –auf sich allein gestellt– viel zu blass und auch viel zu unbestimmt, als dass er ohne den Beistand von anderen Kräften des Geistes als Antriebskräfte zu moralischem Handeln und damit zum Wirken in Würde führen könnte. Daher muss die Einsicht in das pflichtgetreue Handeln mit den Kräften des Gefühls –hier vor allem: der Freude und des Glücks– verbunden sein und einhergehen; denn diese Kräfte verleihen dem als pflichtgemäß Erkannten dann die Kraft, das Ziel anzustreben, das die Vernunft klar erkannt hat; und *so* wird dann die Würde der Moral zur Würde des moralisch Handelnden. Verkehrt wär' es, die Kräfte des Gefühls als von sich aus vernunftwidrig zu erachten; sie können –und sollten!– vielmehr stets vernunftkonform eingesetzt werden.

Ich habe diesen beiden –hier von mir zusammengefasst wiedergegebenen– Hinweisen zugestimmt:

Wer –im Sinne Kant's– zu einem *Heiligen* geworden ist, bei dem wird das moralische Handeln zweifellos mit jenem heiteren –weil unbewölktem– Gemüt erfolgen, das von Glückseligkeit durchdrungen ist.

Wer hingegen diese Heiligkeit –diesen höchsten Zustand seines Geistes– noch nicht erreicht hat, für den ist es ohne jeden Zweifel entscheidend, mit seinem moralisch geführten Handeln jene stille und dabei ungetrübte Freude –eben: die Glückseligkeit– zu erleben, die das weitere moralische Handeln in Gedanken–Worten–Taten im Einklang mit der vernunftgemäß ermittelten Pflicht beflügelt: eine Glückseligkeit, die im Geist vom Hintergrund aus wirkt, und die von selber nicht erlischt; die vielmehr erst dann erlischt –und dieses dann allerdings abrupt–, sowie im Geist Gedanken von zweifelhaftem moralischem Wert aufkommen, somit Gedanken, die dabei von der Vernunft nicht sofort als solche erkannt und dadurch ausgelöscht werden.

Ein solches –mit Glückseligkeit einhergehendes– Handeln ist weder auf eigene Nützlichkeit noch auf die des sozialen Umfelds bezogen:

Wer beispielsweise ein Tier, das aus seinem natürlichen Aufenthaltsort herausgeraten ist und deswegen in Kürze zu sterben hätte, zu seinem Aufenthaltsort zurückbringt, der hat mit diesem Handeln weder für sich noch für die Seinen einen *äußeren* –einen materiellen oder sozialen oder politischen– Nutzen erzielt. Der dabei von ihm erzielte *innere* Nutzen hingegen ist beträchtlich; und dieser äußert sich in eben einem solchen lang-anhaltenden Gefühl des stillen Glücks, eines Glücks, das zwar mit Würde verbunden ist, bei dem die Würde jedoch nicht zur Überheblichkeit umkippt.

Ganz in diesem Sinne ist eine solche –von Schadenfreude und ähnlichen Abarten der Freude grundverschiedene– Freude *vollständig* im Einklang mit der Vernunft und mit dem vernunftgemäß Erwogenen.

Warum Kant zwar in seinen *vorkritischen* Schriften zur Moral den im moralischen Handeln wirkenden Faktor der Glückseligkeit betont hat, ihn jedoch danach in seinen *kritischen* Schriften zur Seite geschoben hat, das ist mir nicht in allen Einzelheiten klar:

- ★ Einer der Gründe hierfür war für ihn zweifellos, dass der Zustand der Glückseligkeit auch auf anderen Wegen zu erreichen ist, sei's durch abartige Einstellungen des Geistes, sei's durch Einnehmen von Drogen, oder sei's durch Stimulierungen bestimmter Gebiete im Nervensystem.

- ★ Ein anderer Grund wird für ihn der gewesen sein: dass zwar das einzelne moralische Handeln von empirischen Gegebenheiten abhängt und mit-bestimmt ist, dass jedoch die Grundsätze des moralischen Handelns *nicht* von irgendwelchen empirischen Umständen bedingt und bestimmt sein dürfen, dass sie daher als apriorisch verpflichtend zu gelten haben; sowie andererseits, dass es keine apriorisch aufweisbare Garantie dafür gibt, dass ein Handeln gemäß der Pflicht und somit ein Handeln in Würde mit einem Gefühl der Glückseligkeit einherzugehen hat.

- ★ Ein weiterer Grund hierfür ist für ihn wohl darin zu suchen, dass er die Würde des moralische Grundgesetzes durch Abstreifen von allem Subjektiven –und dann eben auch von Gefühlen wie dem der Glückseligkeit– die vollendete moralische Intersubjektivität –in seinen Worten: die Objektivität– hat zukommen lassen und erweisen wollen, und mit dieser dann deren nicht-bedingte –deren unbedingte– Würde.

- ★ Hinzu mag für ihn noch die Überlegung gekommen sein, dass die Quantität –das Ausmaß, der Grad– an Gefühlen im Allgemeinen und an Glückseligkeit im Besonderen bei gleichartigem Handeln nicht von

vornherein –nicht apriorisch– jeweils umfangsgleich zu sein braucht, und dass er dies häufig –je nach Gemütszustand– auch garnicht ist.

★ Vielleicht mag ihn hierbei auch die Überlegung geleitet haben, dass es keinesfalls gewährleistet ist, dass die Qualität –der Gefühlswert– der Intersubjektivität –und in *diesem* Sinne: der Objektivität– ermangelt: So, wie die *eine* Person nicht wissen kann, welche Farbqualität eine *andere* Person beim Betrachten eines grünen oder eines roten Gegenstands wahrnimmt –und was eine rot-grün-blinde Person dabei an Farbqualität wahrnimmt–, ebenso weiß auch die *eine* nicht, was die *andere* beim Durchführen einer moralisch-vergleichbaren Handlung dabei an Gefühlsinhalten erlebt.

Hier allerdings kann man zu Recht einwenden, dass weder die Qualität der Farbempfindung beim Erkennen von etwas Farbigen noch die Qualität der Glücksempfindung beim Handeln im Sinne des Pflichtgemäßen und daher des Würdevollen die Intersubjektivität einerseits des Erkennens und andererseits die Intersubjektivität des Handelns in irgendeiner Weise beeinträchtigt oder zumindest beeinträchtigen könnte.

Grundsätzlich ist –und daher stimme ich den beiden vorhin gegebenen Hinweisen bei– das Subjektive sowohl beim Erkennen als auch beim Handeln *dann* unschädlich, wenn das subjektiv erfolgte Erkennen bzw. das subjektiv erfolgte Handeln hierbei als intersubjektiv-gültig erwiesen werden kann. Ein *solches* intersubjektiv erfolgtes Erweisen der Gültigkeit setzt dann –ganz im Sinne dieser Hinweise– voraus, dass die damit einhergehenden Empfindungen und Gefühle im Einklang mit der Vernunft walten, und mehr noch: dass sie der Vernunft zu-arbeiten.

Ich verheimliche nicht, dass ich mich zwar weitgehend, aber nicht gänzlich an dem großen Philosophen Kant³¹ anschließe.

Ein –für mich– entscheidender Punkt, an dem ich von seiner Philosophie der Moral abweiche, betrifft mein Beharren auf einer Aristoteles-artigen Bestimmung des Begriffs „Mensch“ im Zusammenhang mit den ethischen Themen, soweit sie unter „Würde–Pflicht–Recht“³² fallen.

³¹ Es gibt in Asien einen kleinen Tempel, der den Vier Großen Weisen unserer Erde gewidmet ist, nämlich: Buddha Śākyamuni, Kōng Fū Zǐ, Sokrátēs, Kant.

³² In anderen Zusammenhängen –und insbesondere für die Zwecke des Alltags– verwend' ich den Ausdruck „Mensch“ natürlich in ungefährer Übereinstimmung mit der Art seiner Verwendung meiner jeweiligen Umgebung, somit dem Erscheinungsbild entsprechend, demnach als Plátōn-artigen Begriff.

PS: Diese –auf das visuelle Erscheinungsbild bezogene– Begriffsbestimmung mag für den Alltag und für die Biologie nützlich sein, aber nicht für Zwecke der Philosophie.

Denn bei einer Plátōn-artigen Bestimmung³³ werden an zentralen Stellen einer solchen Bestimmung Kriterien eingesetzt, die entweder das äußere materielle Erscheinungsbild einer gegenwärtig bestehenden Rasse von Lebewesen von anderen Lebewesen abgrenzt, oder das innere materielle Erscheinungsbild dieser Rasse. Wiewohl solche Kriterien, aus moralischer Sicht betrachtet, gänzlich irrelevant sind, werden sie zu dem Zweck erstellt, sich über die Lebewesen außerhalb dieser Grenzlinien zu erheben und sie als Verfügungsobjekte der innerhalb dieser Grenzlinien angesiedelten Lebewesen zu erachten und zu verwenden.

Gänzlich irrelevant in moralischer Sicht sind solche Grenzlinien, die mit chemischen und mit physikalischen Begriffen operieren. Und daher ist –wie immer eine solche Abgrenzung im Einzelnen ausfallen mag– nicht einzusehen, weshalb bei einem auf solche Art beschriebenen Lebewesen [moralische]³⁴ *Würde* zukommt, und mit [moralischer] *Würde* dann [moralische] *Pflicht*, und mit [moralischer] *Pflicht* dann [moralisches] *Recht*.

Eingeschränkt in ihrem Anwendungsbereich ist *jede* Art von *Würde* [= *jede* Art der Begriffsbestimmung des Ausdrucks „Würde“], die von *außer-moralischer* Beschaffenheit ist; und *eingeschränkt* in

³³ In unseren Tagen wird in akademischen Kreisen eine Plátōn-artige Begriffsbestimmung von „Mensch“ zunehmend nicht am äußeren Erscheinungsbild eines Lebewesens, sondern am inneren Bild bestimmt, nämlich: chemisch, d.h.: an seinen chemischen Bausteinen und deren Zusammenfügungen, und an den biologischen Auswirkungen dieser stofflichen bzw. materiellen Zusammenfügungen. Als diese Bausteine sind vor Jahrzehnten die Chromosomen genommen worden; gegenwärtig erachtet man die Gene als solche. Und irgendwann wird man die Moleküle oder die Atome oder die Quarks oder ... als die Bausteine des Lebewesens bestimmen.

Mit welchen –*nicht* allzu *willkürlich* gezogenen– *scharfen* Grenzlinien man sich dabei von den Vorfahren der gegenwärtigen Rasse der Menschen abgrenzen wird, das dürfte dabei eine stets strittige Frage bleiben; und welchen *scharfen* Grenzlinien man sich dabei von den Nachfahren der gegenwärtigen Rasse der Menschen –von denen wir die Vorfahren sind– abgrenzen will, das bleibt ohnehin reine Spekulation, wenn gleich eine, die in einer Plátōn-artigen Definition, sollte sie sauber sein, nicht fehlen darf.

Genau betrachtet, sind *alle* Plátōn-artigen Definitionen des Begriffs „Mensch“ von rassistischer Art. Und bezogen sind sie auf ein Erscheinungsbild von Lebewesen, die sich dem gegenwärtigen seit dem Ende der letzten Eiszeit ungefähr gleichen und die nach dem Ende der kommenden Eiszeit vielleicht ausgestorben sein werden.

³⁴ Hier und im Folgenden verwend' ich den Ausdruck „Würde“ stets und ausschließlich im Sinne der *moralischen* *Würde*, unter gänzlichem Außer-Acht-Lassen von von Verwendungsarten dieses Ausdrucks insbesondere in gesellschaftlichen und politischen Zusammenhängen, wie etwa: „in Amt und Würde“.

genau diesem Sinn ist daher ein *solcher* Begriff „Würde“. *Uneingeschränkt* hingegen ist in ihrem Anwendungsbereich *diese* Art von Würde, die von *moralischem* Wert ist; und *uneingeschränkt* ist daher ein *solcher* Begriff, der mit Ausformungen der *Goldenen Regel* einhergeht, der sich somit auf den *moralischen* Aspekt der Menschlichkeit – der Humanität, der *humanitas*– bezieht.

Eine Plátón-artige Begriffsbestimmung orientiert sich, grob gesprochen, am Begriff „Menschheit“, am Begriff „human being“, eine Aristotéles-artige hingegen am Begriff „Menschlichkeit“, am Begriff „being human“.

Eine Aristotéles-artige Begriffsbestimmung von „Mensch“ nimmt zum Unterscheiden daher an zentraler Stelle *nicht* auf das *Stoffliche* – auf das Materielle –, sondern vielmehr auf das *Geistige* – auf das Mentale – Bezug: auf das Vorhandensein von Sinneskräften und deren Gefühlsbewertungen, und auf das Vorhandensein von Verstandeskräften samt deren Vernunftbewertungen, wie entwickelt oder wie eingeschränkt solche Kräfte dabei im Einzelfall auch sein mögen.

Nun sind allerdings nicht alle Menschen –im Sinne Plátón's: alle ungefederten Zweibeiner mit breiten Fingernägeln– in ihren Empfindungs- und Bewusstseinskräften uneingeschränkt, einmal ganz abgesehen von Menschen, bei denen durch Erkrankungen oder durch Verletzungen wichtige Teile des Nervensystems inaktiv geworden sind. Und umgekehrt gibt es manche Tiere, die recht vielen Menschen beispielsweise im Reflektieren zumindest gleichwertig sind, wenn nicht gar überlegen.³⁵

³⁵ Wer sich intensiv mit Katzen und mit Hunden befasst hat, der wird mir hierin uneingeschränkt zustimmen.

Allgemein kann gesagt werden:

* Tiere, die mit ihrem körperlichen wie auch mit ihrem sprachlichen Verhalten zu Täuschen und damit zu Lügen in der Lage sind, sie können zu diesem Zweck überlegen und nachdenken, auch wenn dies bei ihnen weniger Zeit in Anspruch nimmt als bei Menschen.

* Dass Tiere viel mehr von den Sprachen der Menschen verstehen als Menschen von den Sprachen der Tiere, das ist insbesondere bezüglich der Sprache der Delphine unübersehbar.

* Dass Tiere beim Nahrungserwerb zumeist noch auf der Stufe der Jäger und Sammler stehen, das unterscheidet sie nicht grundsätzlich von den Menschen der Gegenwart, und ist aus moralischer Sicht ohnehin belanglos; und zudem ist nicht vorherzusehen, wie sich welche Tierarten nach den nächsten Eiszeiten in welche Richtungen hin entwickeln werden.

Jene andere Einschränkungen, die die *außer-moralische* Würde betrifft, ist bezogen auf die soziale und politische Umgebung des Handelnden, seines Handelns im Denken und Sprechen und Tun. Hingegen sind *diese* –die *moralische* Würde betreffenden– Einschränkungen des Handelnden, nur auf den Handelnden selber bezogen, nämlich auf das Ausmaß seiner Teilhabe an der *uneingeschränkten* Würde der moralischen Grundgesetze, vereinfacht beschrieben in der *Goldenen Regel*.³⁶

Ob man ein Lebewesen, das in dieser Weise uneingeschränkt an der uneingeschränkten Würde teilhat, dann –wie Kant es getan hat– als einen *Heiligen* erachtet oder –wie ich lieber sagen würde– als einen *Weisen*, das ist dann eine Frage von nachfolgender Wichtigkeit.

Ein *Freund der Weisheit* –und in eben diesem Wortsinn dann: ein *Philosoph* – wird seine Bewusstseinskräfte unter Einsetzung seiner Gefühlskräfte auf das rasche Erreichen des unverlierbaren Ziels einer solchen *Weisheit* hin ausrichten.³⁷

* Dass es nicht stimmt, dass nur Menschen, nicht jedoch Tiere Erfahrungen und Wissen an ihre unmittelbaren Nachkommen weiterreichen, und diese dann wieder an die ihren, und so fort: das kann jeder Mensch beispielsweise an Fischen erkennen: am Verhalten von Fischen in entfernten Gegenden in Seen, in denen noch nie geangelt worden ist, und im Vergleich dazu am Verhalten gleichrassigen Fischen in den Seen und Teichen Mitteleuropas. Denn so lange Tiere mit ihrem natürlichen Haupt-Feind – mit den Menschen– noch nicht in Kontakt getreten sind, kennen sie nicht die Gefahr, die für sie von dieser Rasse ausgeht.

* Und was schließlich das soziale und moralische Verhalten betrifft, da sind vernunftbegabte Tiere –wie beispielsweise Menschenaffen und Elefanten und Delphine– den Menschen durchaus gleichwertig und oftmals ohnehin überlegen.

³⁶ Zwar kann man sie auch eingeschränkt verstehen, nämlich: eingeschränkt auf die Rasse der Menschen, gemäß: „Was du nicht willst, das Dir ein Mensch tut, das füg' auch keinem anderen Menschen zu!“. Und man kann diese Einschränkung noch enger ziehen, wie dies Rassisten aller Art zu tun pflegen.

Ich selber weigere mich, einer solchermaßen *eingeschränkten* Goldenen Regel einen über diese Einschränkung hinausreichenden Wert –und mit diesem Wert eine größere Würde– zukommen zu lassen.

³⁷ Nicht nur Kriegsherren schlagen dann und wann auf diesem Weg die Gegenrichtung ein, sondern vereinzelt auch Philosophie-Professoren:

Im Nazi-Reich hat sich Heidegger –wie sich dies in seinen erst jetzt veröffentlichten „Schwarzen Heften“ unwiderlegbar zeigt–, hinsichtlich des Strebens im Sinne von „Freund der Weisheit“ als ein Negativ-Beispiel hierzu stilisiert und sich in genau diesem Sinn als Gegenpol zu Kant dargestellt.

Dass er dabei von Pláton's Ideal des Zusammenwirkens von Fürsten und Philosophen inspiriert worden ist, darf ohne jedes weitere Argument fest behauptet werden.



北京大學

高等人文研究院

Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies, PKU



北京大學

PEKING UNIVERSITY