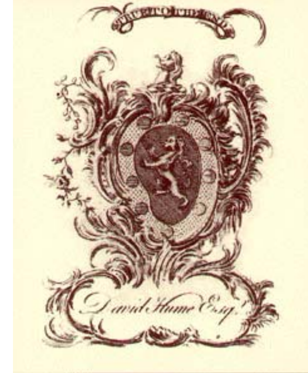

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J. B. SCHNEEWIND. *The Invention of Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. xxii + 624. ISBN 0-521-47399-3, $69.95, cloth; ISBN 0-521-47938-X, $26.95, paper.

In J. B. Schneewind's *The Invention of Autonomy* we are given a monumental history of moral philosophy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a history more comprehensive and richer in detail than one would have thought possible in a single volume. Though the daunting erudition, agreeably unobtrusive, inspires confidence, it is Schneewind's gift of narrative that makes his book such a pleasure and his story so compelling. Schneewind originally conceived the book, he tells us, to "broaden our historical comprehension of Kant's moral philosophy by relating it to the earlier work to which it was a response" (3), but he does much, much more as he charts the fitful transition from morality as obedience to the later and now widely accepted conception of morality as self-governance. In its broad outline, the story is familiar, beginning with Montaigne's skepticism, moving through modern natural law theory, rationalist, perfectionist, and moral sense responses and ending with Bentham and Kant. But Schneewind adds to acute and deeply informed discussions of Hobbes, Locke, Clarke, Hume, and Kant, clear, often arresting summaries, in varying degrees of detail, of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Machiavelli, Suarez, Charron, Grotius, Cumberland, Pufendorf, Thomasius, DuVair, Justus Lipsius, Herbert of Cherbury, Descartes, Gassendi, Whichcote, John Smith, More, Cudworth, Spinoza, Leibniz, Barbeyrac, Malebranche, Nicole, Bayle, Harrington, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Butler, Price, Adam Smith, Reid, Paley, Hartley, Helvetius, d'Holbach, Bentham, de Sade, Wolff, Crusius, Voltaire, La

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Mettrie, Diderot, Rousseau, and others. If, as no doubt they will, some readers will fault some of Schneewind's interpretations, none will fail to admire his achievement in ferreting out and combining in such a fascinating narrative the leading ideas of this host of thinkers. It is safe to predict, moreover, that this study will inspire others to explore some of these less-read authors and to produce more fine-grained monographs, and further to deepen our understanding of the period and of the way we have come to think of ourselves.

This, as I said, is a monumental work. The best I can hope for in a short review is to outline its main themes to give some sense of what an absorbing book it is. I hasten to add that it is Schneewind's history I seek to outline, not some history of my own, which, in any case, I would disclaim on all too many points any competence to write. I can only hope that the impression this outline leaves is accurate.

I begin with some background, starting with Aquinas. Aquinas took moral virtue to be obedience to law written in conscience; the first law being to seek good and avoid evil, and other natural laws spelling out the necessary means to our true good—social harmony and union with God. Thus are understood the love commandment and the Decalogue. Since Aquinas held also that to will is to seek the apparent good, he could lay the blame for practical error only on ignorance and thereby, according to his critics, made sin impossible. To make sin possible, Duns Scotus thought it necessary to argue that in God will is more noble than intellect, that only the love commandment can be derived from God's nature and that the Decalogue expresses the divine will, a will that is incomprehensible to us. In this radical voluntarism, Scotus sought not only to make room for sin but also to preserve God's omnipotence. In these aims he was followed by Luther and Calvin. Still, all parties agreed that to be moral was to be obedient to God's commands. But here consensus ended and sectarian squabbling and attendant social and political conflict began, creating a moral and intellectual climate congenial to skepticism, which found its eloquent voice in Montaigne. Not addressing the skeptic, Suarez failed in his effort to revivify traditional natural law theory. The Protestant, empiricist Hugo Grotius had greater success with a new kind of natural law theory.

The problem Grotius took on—the Grotian problematic—was how to get human beings who are at once sociable and quarrelsome to live together in harmony. The solution he proposed, based on plain facts of experience concerning human motivation and the human condition, was simple: we should adhere to certain laws—natural laws—whose content we can determine empirically, though, as it happens, these same laws can also be found in scripture. Grotius's frank empiricism, designed to silence skeptics, rankled religious readers who did not want their God at the margins of morality. But skeptics were not silenced either, doubting that a more scrupulous eye would discover in human nature much in the way of sociability. "We do not . . . by nature seek Society for its own sake," Hobbes wrote, "but that we may receive some

Honour or Profit from it; these we desire Primarily, that Secondarily" (*De Cive* I 2).

The times were not ready, however, for a secular morality built exclusively on interest, as the reception to Hobbes's theory showed. The moral theorist of the times was Pufendorf. He accepted the Grotian problematic and in large part the Grotian solution, but he added something radically new: moral entities—irreducible moral qualities of action and character that are imposed by God's free choice. This strongly voluntarist innovation not only made God indispensable to morality, it created for the first time conceptual space for something else new under the sun, distinctively moral obligation. Pufendorf's voluntarism was tempered, however. While his God is free to create us without imposing any morality, since he did evidently create us as social animals, consistency—though not some antecedently given moral order—required that he impose rights and duties suitable to our nature. It is for this reason that we are able to discover the laws of nature from an empirical inquiry into our own psychology and circumstance and find in this discovery natural motives of interest and generosity for obedience. Nonetheless, Pufendorf denied that we can infer from what we discover that these same laws are designed maximally to promote our own good or happiness. In his view, God's own legislative aims must remain for us dark. To be a law, Pufendorf writes, is to be "a decree by which a superior obligates a subject to adapt his actions to the former's command" (124). Pufendorf insists that to obligate is not to advise, to counsel, to threaten, or to coerce.

Here is a difficulty. If God is not bound by law—impossible on the voluntarist view—in what does his justice lie? On his authority? But what is the basis for his authority? It is not God's irresistible power that gives authority to his commands and places us under obligation, but nor is it any insight we can have about God's reason for creating us. This leaves obscure what God's authority amounts to. As Schneewind writes: "His voluntarism seems to force him into pure Hobbesianism" (135).

What distinctively moral motivation amounts to is also obscure. Pufendorf seems reduced to the claim that simply seeing a law as a divine command awakens in us a motive for obedience that is distinct from fear of sanction. In any event, he separates moral from any form of natural motivation. This requires, in turn, that he offer an account of the will that permits a choice between incommensurable reasons for action, in short, a free will, which he supplied: "The will of individuals exerts the force of its indifference on particular goods and evils" (137). We are free to do or not to do what we desire and free to do or not to do what we are obligated to do. However, since Pufendorf's moral entities have (by hypothesis) no causal force, as the natural motives do, even if we are said to have incommensurable reasons for acting and must choose between natural and moral necessity, we are left with a moral necessity that lacks motive force. Alluding to Kant, Schneewind writes of Pufendorf:

> He therefore needs a separate faculty of free will to explain how moral entities can be effective in human life even though they possess no causal strength. But he offers no account of how recognition of a moral entity can have effects in the physical world. If he was the first modern to find this problem squarely at the center of his metaphysics of ethics, he was not the last. (138)

An early and acute critic of Pufendorf's voluntarism was Christian Thomasius, an unfamiliar but important figure in Schneewind's story. Thomasius nicely set out the main difficulties. Like Richard Cumberland, Thomasius sought to formulate a theory of natural law outside the framework of voluntarism. Voluntarists can relate God to man only through superstitious fear, he argued, while a wise man must relate to God as a father, who in pursuit of the greatest good seeks the greatest good of his creation, man. The wise man must therefore have notions of the honorable and shameful not defined in terms of divine will and sanction. To the voluntarist question, "What, then, becomes of obligation?" Thomasius replied, first, that divine command is not law, strictly speaking, but wise counsel. Obligation is wise counsel that instills fear by exhibiting the connection between action and outcome.

Having rejected voluntarism, Thomasius urged corresponding conceptual changes. First, he made a threefold distinction between the honorable, the just and the proper (or decorous). Justice looks only to outward conduct, and the aim of rules of justice is to make society possible by keeping people from harming each other. Decorum also looks to conduct, but its rules are not necessary for society. The honorable, by contrast, looks to motive and character. Its fundamental principle is: "Whatever you will that others should do, do yourself." The principle of decorum is: "Whatever you will that others should do to you, do to them." And the principle of justice is: "Whatever you do not want to have done to you, do not do to others" (163–164). Only the rules of justice can be backed by threats of punishment.

Now, at just this point Thomasius discovered a fatal incoherence in the natural law doctrine as it relates to imperfect duty. Pufendorf, adapting Grotius's distinction between perfect and imperfect rights, distinguished between perfect duties (strict justice), specific duties of performance that may be legally enforced and are indispensable for any society, and imperfect duties (universal justice), say, of generosity, gratitude, respect, personal assistance, that may not be legally enforced but are meritorious. Though Pufendorf wished to bring all duties under the general rubric of loving one's neighbor, since the central thrust and argumentative power of his theory derives from the Grotian problematic, he could give anything but limited love short shrift and thereby, in Thomasius's view, confused justice with morality. For morality, we need an analysis of obligation that is broad enough to cover both justice and honor, where inner forces, not external will, motivate. Thomasius

rejected the construction of imperfect duty as a mere supplement to justice and maintained that obligations of honor and propriety, which cannot be externally imposed, are morally more basic. We are "obligated to ourselves" and "make laws to ourselves (for example, through a vow)" (165). As moral agents, in short, we are entirely self-governed. Schneewind concludes that Thomasius is amply justified in his proud assertion: "I am the first to have set things on the right footing" (166).

Another critic of voluntarism, and an important figure in Schneewind's story, is Leibniz, who developed a rationalist, perfectionist alternative to natural law theory. In the context of an elaborate and influential metaphysics that set the terms for subsequent debate, Leibniz showed how an antivoluntarist could keep God essential to morality. Returning to the classical equation of goodness and being, he made cosmic order rational and teleological (subordinating mechanical to final causation) and made morality an intelligible part of this order. The voluntarist view that moral law is opaque to reason and God incomprehensible, he objected, militates against the scriptural injunction to love God, since we cannot love a God who is tyrannical, whimsical, and treats us like "earthworms" (239). We must on the contrary conceive God as worthy of love, which is to conceive him as good and just and disposed necessarily to act for the best. And because God does act for the best, we may be assured that our world is the best possible.

In this best possible, perfectly ordered world, all activity, from that of the lowliest to that of human beings, harmoniously contributes to the perfection of the whole; it is also fixed from the moment of creation. Thus, no more than God do we enjoy freedom of indifference. For, like God, we act for reasons, that is, for the best—at least, our perception of the best—weighing the value of goods in view and choosing the maximum (apparent) good on balance. We are free, therefore, since to be free just is to act for reasons. We do not, of course, have the absolute freedom of God, since for the most part we lack clear knowledge of the good in view, which explains why we often do what is wrong, thereby contributing to the moral evil (wrongdoing) and the physical evil (pain and unhappiness) in the world. Nonetheless, all our activity, including what is morally evil, makes its necessary, foreordained contribution to the metaphysical perfection of the whole.

Leibniz's is a morality of love. At the center of his moral psychology is self-love, but in its perfect form this is at once love of God and of all that God loves. For the perception of the good is what moves: the more obscure our perception, the more self-centered our resulting conduct and the less perfect we ourselves are; the clearer our perceptions, the more other-directed our conduct and the more perfect we ourselves become. The clearer our perceptions, moreover, the greater our pleasure in acting. At the limit, our most durable pleasure must lie in love of God. The moral ideal, then, is to love as God loves; as we approach this ideal we will come to love our neighbors as ourselves. In this

way we advance our own good as we advance the good of others, resulting in a perfect harmony between our own happiness, virtue, and the happiness of others. Here is no Malebranchean separation of the pursuit of virtue and the pursuit of happiness, nor a sharp distinction between perfect and imperfect duty; justice is the charity of the wise. As for natural law, it has a strictly instrumental function, a necessary means (as Hobbes rightly argued) for preserving societies but not a sanction-backed divine command.

Although the lines between the voluntarist and the anti-voluntarist are here clearly drawn, the nearest thing to a direct confrontation is to be found in Barbeyrac's defense of Pufendorf against Leibniz (250). The antagonists agree, of course, that God is essential to morality; the question is, 'How?' Voluntarists would keep us in humble submission, asking for blind obedience, or, at least, for obedience to law simply as command. Antivoluntarists would have God comprehensible, perhaps a loving and merciful father, assuring us that the world is hospitable to our moral endeavors and that in the end justice—harmony between virtue and happiness—will be achieved.

Barbeyrac defended Pufendorf on two main points. He tried first to show that Pufendorf's God acts according to law and is not the arbitrary or whimsical tyrant Leibniz portrays. In this defense, however, he effectively backed off from Pufendorf's own definition of law and failed to explain what law God follows. In any event, judging that Barbeyrac conceded the first of Leibniz's points, Schneewind says that it is the revolt against God as an arbitrary commander that prevailed.

On the topic of moral obligation, however, Barbeyrac made a more telling point. For Leibniz, moral obligation is moral necessity, the necessity of an action aimed at the good. What obligates is our knowledge of the good. Strictly, this is true only in the ideal case of the good man. For what it means to be moral is to be natural for the good or wise man, since by definition what is morally good is what is naturally good to the wise man. Yet even the less than good man will be moved by what appears good, and so from his own perspective he will do as he is obligated to do. In any event, for the wise and unwise alike, all reasons for action are commensurable and are seen, mistakenly or otherwise, to justify.

Barbeyrac complained that in this account of moral obligation and of moral motivation God has no place. His objection, however, was ancillary to a deeper one, one that focused on Leibniz's claim that all reasons for action are commensurable. Barbeyrac stood firmly with Pufendorf in insisting that moral reasons are *toto caelo* different from reasons deriving from a perception of the good—natural reasons. It is evident, he thought, that moral necessity is not a species of natural, good-dependent necessity. Even the pagans, he observed, saw the difference between the honest and the useful. And we too can see perfectly plainly that while we are permitted to ignore our own utility if this does not harm others, we are not permitted similarly to ignore our duty. Moral

praise and blame do not accordingly fix on our natural love of the good. Of course, Leibniz can allow for certain forms of self-sacrifice, but always in the pursuit of the good. For him the charitable person is wiser than the less than charitable, who is confused and shortsighted. But this misses the point. Barbeyrac argued that morality requires certain actions no matter what the consequences. This calls for a kind of necessity Leibniz does not allow for: distinctively moral necessity. Moral necessity, he argued, is not the necessity of the means. Seeing, then, that moral reasons are incommensurable with natural reasons, Barbeyrac could see no alternative to the necessity of the means other than the necessity to obey the authoritative command of another. No more than does Pufendorf, however, did he articulate the needed account of moral motivation.

In Britain, too, there were debates between voluntarists and their opponents, but the discussion there turned away from making either obligation or the good primary in favor of placing virtue at the center of morality. This was not to be the virtue of Aristotle, however, nor the virtue of obedience, nor of perfection. Oddly, the new conception of virtue had its origins in the republican, Machiavelli, who conceived virtue to be the character of a good citizen in a well-ordered republic. This "republican" notion ran through James Harrington, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson and found what is now perhaps its best-known form in Hume. According to Harrington, virtue is a condition in the individual in which reason governs and controls passion, just as justice is the condition in the commonwealth in which reason, identified with the good of the whole, governs private interest. Harrington outlined a form of procedural justice and argued that the evident justice of the procedure by which laws are made and ratified will mold the virtuous character of its citizens. To his critics, however, Harrington's republic placed too great demands on our tolerance for austerity and seemed unfit for human beings as we know them. Republican thought needed an account of human nature with better empirical credentials.

This it found in Shaftesbury. Brought up on Cambridge Platonism, raised on post-Harringtonian republican thinking, Shaftesbury rejected Lockean voluntarism and the need for divine sanction to establish public order, yet accepted Locke's anti-Stoic (and anti-Leibnizian) account of the passions as well as Locke's view that we are moved by specific uneasiness, not by thoughts about long-term interest or happiness. He sought a better way than Locke's appeal to divine sanction to explain how we can gain control over our passions and effect order in our lives and polity.

Against voluntarists, Shaftesbury urged the familiar argument that we cannot love a God who is not good and just. Against certain skeptics, he urged a closer empirical examination of our nature, which, to him, revealed a range of specific desires from those more or less self-directed to others decidedly other-directed, leading us quite naturally to nonmercenary service to others, in

which service, he added, we tend to find our own greatest pleasure. Close empirical examination also revealed a reflective sentiment—a moral sentiment—that has as its object first-order desires and affections, and disclosed further that we naturally approve of our first-order desires and affections in proportion as they exhibit order or harmony, the order and harmony that constitute moral virtue. Shaftesbury conceded, however, that natural though this reflective sentiment is, it needed a liberal education for its proper development. In any case, it is this sentiment, not any command of God, that establishes right and wrong. This it does indirectly. For what it approves directly is the harmony of our first-order desires and affections. What is right is what flows from virtue; what is wrong is what a virtuous person would disdain to do. In this moral sense theory we have a new version of morality as self-governance: morality is governance, not by reason, but by an internal sentiment that takes as its direct objects one's own desires and affections. Suppose these in harmony, we are not only fully self-governed but happy. Finally, in the ideal harmonious arrangement of desire and affection, generosity and benevolence are dominant, allowing no conflict between private interest and the good of others. "Here," Schneewind writes, "is the psychology for the classic republic" (306).

Finally, Shaftesbury has his way with the moral skeptic in a second way, by accommodation. For his is itself a skeptic's morality; it entirely avoids the traditional problem of matching our moral beliefs with a mind-independent order of values and confines itself exclusively to "appearances," that is, to desires and affections. In this he was followed by Hutcheson, Hume, and even Kant.

Hutcheson shared Shaftesbury's republican sentiments and accepted his virtue-theoretic, moral sense framework. He did not, however, endorse Shaftesbury's deistic tendencies, his elitism, or his Platonic harmonies. We do have a moral sense, he said, but this is a natural, uncultivated feeling, that responds not to a harmony of first-order desires, but to a single disposition, benevolence. As for justice—rules of justice—these have only instrumental value toward the same end that benevolence projects, the general happiness. There is, therefore, a single virtuous motive that is natural, and sustains beneficence directly and justice indirectly. If benevolence is weak, conduct having the outward look of virtue may be sustained either by external or internal sanction, this being obligation, the desire for self-approval. Like Shaftesbury, however, Hutcheson thought that with suitable guidance, we will discover that our own greatest happiness lies in active benevolence.

Hutcheson relied on his case for the moral sense to refute both Mandeville and Clarke. Mandeville sought to account for our manner of distinguishing between virtue and vice, right and wrong, entirely in terms of self-interest. Like Hobbes, he saw the need for rules to regulate social interaction. He asked, how did our morality come about, and what secures its allegiance? To both ques-

tions he gave a single answer: morality was invented by the strong as a vehicle for securing and exercising power. Exploiting the average person's desire for approval, they praised the weak for suppressing self-interest in the name of the public welfare. "The moral virtues," he wrote, are the work of skillful and wary politicians; they "are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride." Like Hume later, Hutcheson argued this account must fail, for the reason that an entirely new sentiment cannot possibly be willed into existence by any group, no matter how skillful and wary. In short, moral sentiment itself stands in refutation of Mandeville's naturalistic and reductionist explanation. As for Clarke, Hutcheson argued that he is wrong about action; in every case, he held, what moves us is desire or aversion, not a mere truth discovered by reason.

Voluntarists tried to keep God essential as the creator and enforcer of morality. Machiavelli and Harrington did not need God to establish public morals, but believed fear of God helpful for public order. Much earlier, Montaigne and Charron in their quite different ways defended a secular moral view, although both were believers. Hobbes kept God at the margins. Mandeville offered a naturalistic account of morality, if not a compelling one. With Hume, however, we come to an uncompromising naturalist who hoped that religion would go away. He sought to supplant natural law with virtue and to free our understanding of morality from anything remotely supernatural. He sought to explain morality, to show how it is a product of our own nature and our own art, how it suits our social condition, how useful it is for others, as well as for ourselves, and how congenial it is to our own psychological economy.

Although the similarities of Hume's and Hutcheson's theories are striking, so also are the differences. No doubt to his credit, Hume saw that justice cannot be explained straightforwardly in terms of the single virtue, benevolence. This correct insight, however, would appear to lead to a difficulty for his virtue ethics. On the one hand, he could find no natural motive to support steady adherence to principles of justice. But nor could he discover any artificial motive, of which the lack would occasion shame or hatred. The moral obligation to adhere to principles of justice, according to the desiderated virtue-theoretic account, must be the feeling of shame that attends one's awareness that one lacks the appropriate motive for justice. But at this point, Hume is in a position similar to that of Pufendorf. He has need for a kind of motive of which he can give no account, or so it would seem.

Next come three continental writers—Christian Wolff, Christian Augustus Crusius, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau—whose works directly influenced Kant's reflections on moral theory. Indeed, Kant's final conception of morality as autonomy can be seen to combine leading ideas of Crusius and of Rousseau and to oppose the rationalist perfectionism of Wolff, on which he was brought up. Wolff was a deeply systematic thinker and gave us, in Schneewind's estimate, "the last full articulation of the claim that rational knowledge of the way

the universe forms a cosmos through God is essential to bringing harmony into our lives and to living with others in social unity" (433–434). Wolff's practical philosophy derives from his psychology, which is "the science of directing the appetitive faculty in choosing good and avoiding evil" (434). There is, he said, a single basic law to guide our conduct: "Do what makes you and your condition, or that of others, more perfect; omit what makes it less perfect." We are obligated to seek the good because it is good; indeed, to be obligated just is to be moved to act in pursuit of (greatest apparent) perfection. Since reason can teach us this lesson, we are a law to ourselves. While it is true that God has created the best of all possible worlds and obligates us through the laws of nature, our obligations are more directly grounded in the nature of things, and they would obtain even if, *per impossibile*, God did not exist. We ourselves, in fact, are like God in that we seek what is good because it is good. Unlike God, of course, we do not represent the good with full clarity and distinctness, although some of us see more clearly than others. It is in the direction of greater clarity that greater perfection lies. What is more, as we achieve clearer perception of the good we become more other-directed in our conduct: "whoever seeks to make himself as perfect as possible seeks also what others seek and desires nothing at their expense" (439). The disposition to seek the most perfection possible is at once virtue and the life of the greatest pleasure, so in Wolff's theory, happiness, perfection, virtue and obligation are unified, unified in support of a consequentialist ethics.

Still, since the judgments of the many are liable to be confused and their conduct short of ideal, they will need the guidance of the less confused. Thus the need for systematic philosophers like Wolff to set out a full system of duties, which he did under the familiar rubrics—duties to God, duties to self, and duties to others. The priority, of course, goes to the duty of self-perfection, since this is the duty to gain ever clearer and more distinct knowledge. And since what we must do for ourselves we must do for others, Wolff could write: "We are obligated to see others as if they were one person with us" (441). Wolff's consequentialism leads, consistently, to the view that we may lie or break a promise if this would promote the greatest good, for which the measure in human terms is the greatest pleasure (441). Justice is, for Wolff, what it is for Leibniz, the charity of the wise.

With Crusius, a vigorous opponent of Wolff, we return to voluntarism, but to a form of voluntarism that claims to be without servility. In Crusius's view, God's mind is infinite and altogether beyond our limited powers to comprehend; we cannot suppose that it is bound either by the laws of our understanding or of our morality. Accordingly, God's will, not itself bound by any law we can understand, is the source of moral law. We are to obey God's laws owing to our dependence on him and from a desire to do so. Schneewind comments: "The moral philosophy that results from Crusius's attempt to rationalize Lutheranism is one of the most original products of the eighteenth cen-

tury" (446). To see how we can be obedient without being servile or blindly obedient, we need first to understand the distinctive character of the human will. In the first place, the will is not, as with Leibniz and Wolff, the same power as the understanding. For Crusius, representations of the understanding do not have motive force. The will, then, is an active power in its own right. Desiring is not confusedly representing the good; desiring, itself an aspect of the will's activity, is representing an object as eligible to be adopted and its object made real through volition. Electing to adopt or not to adopt a desire—willing—is a further aspect of the will's activity. Crusius argued that since God does nothing in vain and our understanding does not motivate, the will as an active power must have primacy over our understanding, which would be useless without it.

To the question, what things are good, Crusius answered (like Hobbes): whatever accords with will or desire. But goodness is not perfection; perfection is causal power. It is God's infinite power that makes God absolutely perfect. And it is as expressing God's perfection that God's creation is good. Analogously, it is as expressing our perfection that what we will is good. If the power of choice is exercised in electing which desires to adopt, our desires are a mixture, some contingent and some noncontingent. Occurrent contingent desires arise from representations of the understanding; as dispositions they are the effect of experiencing the impact of culture. From these desires arise the general desire for happiness. Noncontingent desires are ingredient in our human nature. Since these are given by God, they cannot but be good. Such are the desire to increase our own perfection—the desire for truth, clarity, good reasoning, the arts, bodily improvement, freedom, friendship, and honor; the desire to be united with whatever it is in which we find perfection, which leads to a general love of or desire to help others; the desire—active conscientiousness—to recognize a divine moral law. Importantly, these basic desires are not commensurable, nor commensurable with the desire for happiness.

Crusius argued that if from active conscientiousness we can do what we are obligated to do, often contrary to other, incommensurable desires, it must be that our will is free, something we directly experience. Crusius held, moreover, that if we did not have this power, God would have had no reason to create the world. For if the world contained no creatures with free will, "created beings would obtain through their reality no other relation to God than what they already had in the mere condition of possibility, namely, that their being and essence depended on him" (448). Since God does nothing in vain, it must be that our will is free and that we are originators of what we do. Indeed, only if we are free can we stand in moral relation with God. Morality, then, is the necessary condition of existence.

The basic desire to recognize the moral law—conscientiousness—is fundamental to our nature, showing that we are indebted to God and that we have obligations. To adopt this desire as our motive is not to act from fear, or hope,

or love; moral motivation is unique. Conscience with its basic law is common to everyone, as must be so, since God judges all equally, without regard to variations in intelligence and experience. So in Crusius we do not have a maximizing conception of the will, as in Leibniz or Wolff. Within the will itself are incommensurable desires. Uppermost in authority is the desire of conscience, which contains its own laws. As for other desires, these give rise to desires for necessary means and, accordingly, to a general law of prudence—to will the means to ends that we will. So far as these ends are distinct from those of conscience, prudence may be said to aim at happiness. But virtue—"the agreement of the moral condition of a mind with the divine laws" (451)—is the aim of conscientiousness. There are, then, duties of prudence and duties of virtue; in the first, we promote our own ends, in the second, the ends of God.

But how does Crusius meet Leibniz's charge that since God commands arbitrarily, our relation to God is one of blind obedience? It is true that, in conscientiously motivated choice, we are not determined by a representation of a predetermined good. On the other hand, we know that God does nothing in vain and from this we may draw a number of conclusions. First, as we have already seen, we are the reason for the world. Second, God's commands must be suitable to our whole nature and we capable of virtue. And we can discover empirically a good deal about our nature, for example, that we need each other and have some feelings of love for each other. Laws suitable to our nature, therefore, would direct us not only to love God, but to cooperate with and to love our neighbors. Third, the use and enjoyment of nature and the happiness we seek, if consistent with a virtuous will, are good, good not only in our eyes but in the eyes of God. In sum, God, who expresses perfection in the act of creation, must also love what he creates. Divine perfection and love, Crusius wrote, "fit together only if God first puts reasonable minds into the world in conditions in which they can exercise virtue, and afterwards distributes happiness in proportion to virtue" (453). Obedience to God-given law seen as Crusius depicts it can plausibly claim, then, to be neither blind nor servile.

Like Crucius, but for different reasons, Rousseau rejected the view that the aim of morality is happiness. He also rejected the accounts of human nature to be found in the moral tradition. Most in this tradition modeled their views of human nature on man in a more or less civilized state. Some found man selfish, others sociable, others even kind, others sinful. In Rousseau's view, those who offered a pessimistic account of human nature were looking at man as he had come to be in corrupt social settings. By nature, he argued, man seeks to preserve himself, is moved by the suffering of others, and otherwise has simple, easily satisfied desires for food, sex, and shelter; he is neither sinful nor selfish nor in a condition calling for external regulation by law. It was with the advent of language that troubles began, since with language came more complex desires—desire for power and possessions, and envy—that

could be satisfied only by some being superior to others in power and wealth, which made for conflict and, in general, an unstable and intolerable condition. Here natural *amour de soi* was transformed into *amour propre*. What was needed was a further transformation, for which the first essential step was to form a civil society through a social contract. This change of condition, from nature to a civil state, Rousseau wrote,

> produces a remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his behavior and giving his actions the morality they previously lacked. Only then, when the voice of duty replaces physical impulse and right replaces appetite, does man, who until that time only considered himself, find himself forced to act upon other principles and to consult his reason before heeding his inclinations. (473–474).

Although the contract is the work of reason, we are able to respond owing to certain emotional aspects of our nature. This is not Mandeville, however, since Rousseau saw that with civil society, man himself is transformed. We learn to regulate our private desires by respect for the general will, a will that aims at the welfare of the whole and each part at once. We are transformed since we come to identify with this will, seeing ourselves as parts of a community. Even as our private will may be at odds with the general, social sanctions may force us to be free, that is, free from enslavement to private passion. For only obedience to the general will is freedom. Here our reason shows us one sort of good, the welfare of the community; our private passions another. We have, then, a divided nature. Our true freedom and better nature, however, lie in our power to choose in conformity with the general will, and in this conformity also lies our greatest satisfaction. Still, we cannot be transformed or moved only by our understanding. Justice and goodness are not "pure moral beings formed by the understanding" (476). "By reason alone," Rousseau wrote in *Émile*, "independent of conscience, no natural law can be established . . . [T]he entire right of nature is only a chimera if it is not founded on a natural need in the human heart" (476). We naturally feel a love of order, and when this is developed, it is conscience. Schneewind writes: "Conscience is thus a Malebranchean love of order, activated in the individual by the social contract" (476).

If transformed man is the virtuous man, who regulates his private desires and passions by conscience, which tracks the general will, those who strive for virtue cannot, on the evidence, expect for this reason alone to find happiness in this life. Virtue deserves happiness. It was in his religious beliefs that Rousseau himself could find not only consolation but a requisite conception of the world as hospitable to morality.

From Rousseau, Kant tells us, he learned to honor the common man.

> I am myself a researcher by inclination. I feel the whole thirst for knowledge and the curious unrest to get further on, or also the satisfaction in every acquisition. There was a time when I believed that this alone could make the honor of humanity and I despised the rabble that knows nothing. Rousseau set me to rights. This dazzling superiority vanishes, I learn to honor man and I would find myself more useless than the common laborer if I did not believe that this observation would impart to all else a value to restore the rights of mankind. (488–489)

It was with moral fervor that Kant turned from the elitist, intellectualist views of Leibniz and Wolff. Although instructed in the Wolffian (and Leibnizian) view that the will is a power of choosing the (apparent) good and that we become self-governing in proportion as we gain ever clearer and more distinct representations of the good, Kant was early on aligned with the voluntarists in taking the primary concept of ethics to be obligation. Nonetheless, he agreed with Leibniz that standard voluntarism had grave defects: it made love of God impossible, divine justice incomprehensible, and left only a morality of tyranny and servility. He agreed further that these problems could be avoided only if God and man were seen as members of a single moral community under the same moral law. So he sought an account of obligation different from Leibniz's and from Pufendorf's, an account within a broader moral theory in which God retained an essential role.

First, Kant discovered in our ordinary concept of duty a moral law—the law of good willing—that is a law for us because it is a law for any rational being, a law for any rational being because necessarily self-imposed by any rational being. This discovery responded to the question how we and God can belong to the same moral community. What Kant claimed to discover, however, Schneewind thinks Kant only invented, and he calls Kant's claim "astonishing . . . that God and we can share membership in a single moral community only if we all equally legislate the law we are to obey" (512). Secondly, as is clear especially in the second *Critique*, Kant made belief in God essential, not as creator of morality nor as source of moral motivation, but as a condition for the world's hospitability to morality. Thus, while Kant remained on the voluntarist side in denying that the concepts of moral good and evil can be defined prior to the moral law, he was firmly in the antivoluntarist camp in making the fundamental principle of morality through and through rational, common to man and God.

What is revolutionary in Kant's discovery (or invention) is Kant's conception of autonomy. Voluntarist philosophers of obedience, who tended to think man selfish by nature and who argued that divine sanction is a necessary condition of moral obligation, at once located the source of moral motivation outside natural human motives. Philosophers of self-governance located moral

obligation and moral motivation within human nature: desire for the good as such in the case of Leibniz and Wolff (however clear our knowledge of the good might be), benevolence in the case of Cumberland, an effective sense of morality tied directly to moral cognition in the case of Clarke, Reid, and Price. Since in all of these views, what is good and lawful remains determined by a source external to our own will, we find no hint of Kant's conception of morality as autonomy. Oddly, it is in Hume that we find a foreshadowing of self-governance as autonomy, since (at least in the case of the artificial virtues) the 'law' is not given to us, we invent it, even if our invention is in turn caused by our own nature. But it would have been in Rousseau's idea, that we will be free only when we live in a society in which we can align our private will with the legislation of a general will, that Kant found the nascent idea of moral autonomy. However, that we invent or create morality, and can adhere to our invention even in the face of passions and private interest, is only a step in the direction of Kantian autonomy. The next step—or leap—is not simply the negative freedom from passion and interest and the positive freedom to follow rules that effect social harmony, but freedom from nature altogether—transcendental freedom. If Kant learned from Rousseau to honor common men and women, he came later to see that the only way adequately to do this was to bring morality within the competence of all; and the only way to do this, in turn, was to give to each person a transcendentally free, self-legislating will. Otherwise, moral capacity would not be inherent in the individual and would not be fairly distributed among moral agents.

Kant rejected the Wolff/Leibniz conception of the will and of happiness and agreed with Locke that desires and feelings do not represent objects, even confusedly, but are mere impulses toward and away from things; and he agreed with Hobbes that the notion of human happiness as a determinate *summum bonum* is illusory: "For [man's] own nature is not so constituted as to rest or be satisfied in any possession or enjoyment whatever" (517). Thus, for this reason alone it was clear to him that a determinate morality could not be based on an egoistic account of reasons for acting nor on a hedonistic measure of value. But Kant had a deeper reason for rejecting hypothetical necessity as sufficient for morality. He agreed with Crusius that reasons of prudence and reasons of morality are not commensurate. He retained the view, common to all three—Wolff, Leibniz, and Crusius—that the will's principle of action must be internal to it, that freedom of the will is not mere freedom of indifference—mere spontaneity—as in Malebranche, Clarke, Price, and others. To the difficult question, what could such a non-good-seeking inner principle of self-determination be, as early as 1765 Kant answered, as Crusius had done, that it must be a principle of consistency in willing. The final articulation of this answer we know from the later *Groundwork*. In his final analysis of the will, Kant combined this principle with the will's power of choice, ascribing to the will both autonomy and spontaneity.

We have seen above that the Grotians saw social conflict as the problem for moral theory, and the morality of obedience to divine law as the solution. Kant did not agree with their precise solution, but he followed them in taking obligation to be the basic moral concept, and he did see that the problem of social conflict—arising from man's unsocial sociability—was one for which morality must provide the solution. The Grotians made law and obligation primary because they thought that only law backed by sanction could effect stable social order. They did not, as we saw, get all the way to morality, however, for they failed to give an account of obedience to law that did not reduce to something mercenary. What is needed, Kant saw from early on, is an account of distinctively moral necessity, not hypothetical necessity. The solution to the problem Kant found, not in the divine will, but in each individual's will. His answer to the question the Grotians could not answer—what is the distinctive motive of morality?—is respect for law as such, a motive unlike any natural motive, but one that arises in us necessarily when we formulate maxims for our own actions.

Having learned from Rousseau to respect the common man—which, for Kant, meant the common man's capacity for moral judgment and virtue—Kant needed to incorporate in his account of obligation a method that not only enabled each to decide what is the right thing to do but to see why it is the right thing. In Montaigne, Schneewind finds an anticipation of such a method internal to our power of moral choice: what is morally acceptable is what Montaigne approves of, not from a disinterested point of view, but after deep personal reflection. In the later moral-sense theorists, what is morally acceptable is what we, as representatives of the moral sense, approve of. Both are examples of pure procedural morality, strongly antirealist, in which the deliberating agent seeks an inner coherence of sentiment that is taken to establish the morality of action. Because it is expressly antirealist and deals only with appearances, Schneewind calls this a skeptical method.

With the antirealist strain of voluntarism and moral sense theory, Kant agreed. He agreed that moral knowledge is reflective knowledge of one's own way of thinking, not knowledge of an independent moral order (say, in the manner of Malebranche or of Clarke). But he rejected the sentimentalist's view that, in Hume's words, morality is more properly felt than judged of. It is not the coherence of our sentiments we seek in moral deliberation, he argued; it is the consistency of our principles of acting with the idea of practical law. In Schneewind's terms, Kant's remains a kind of skeptical method, since as with Hume, our knowledge is restricted to how things appear; nevertheless, we do not lack objectively valid, rational guidance in moral deliberation. The moral order of the world, then, is not pre-established; it is what we create, on the condition that each self-legislating member follows the moral law.

Finally, Kant shared with others—Rousseau's vicar, Butler, the intuitionists—the view that commonsense morality is essentially sound, not only in its

precepts but in its attitude toward love. Since, like voluntarists, he took obligation to be the primary ethical concept, he had the remaining task of suitably accommodating love. He harmonizes obligation and love in the imperfect duty of benevolence. In the *Groundwork*, Kant did not leave much room for love, remarking famously that it could not be commanded. Nor did he speak much of virtue. These matters he turned to in his *Metaphysics of Morals*, where, in a change from the *Groundwork*, he inaugurated a distinction between duties of justice and duties of virtue, the latter having to do with what ends we can and cannot will as universal law and the former with strict duties of performance or omission that are, morally speaking, enforceable. We have imperfect duties of virtue, then, to make our own perfection, moral and natural, and the well-being of others an end. The pursuit of moral self-perfection is virtue and carries with it both the commitment to justice performed virtuously and beyond this to the welfare of others in accordance with justice. Virtue, as the choice of ends, is a matter of our own free choice; we acquire merit only through carrying out our duties of virtue.

Virtue is still determined by principle—respect for the law—even if carrying out the imperfect duties of virtue requires judgment. For Kant, as for Rousseau's Savoyard vicar, kindness of heart alone is not virtue. Still, when we act virtuously, we are not acting in order to do our duty; we are acting to effect an end that it is our duty to have. In the case of the well-being and happiness of others, our commitment to this end is deepened by our love of others. So there is a place not only for practical love but also for human kindness. As Kant wrote:

> Helping others to achieve their ends is a duty. If a man practices it often and succeeds in realizing his purpose, he eventually comes to feel love for those he has helped. Hence the saying: you ought to love your neighbor . . . means do good to your fellow-man, and this will give rise to love of man in you. (528)

In the end, Kant and Leibniz share the conviction that self-perfection is the pre-eminent duty, although for Kant this is a matter of the will. And they both see that the end goal of mankind generally is the perfection of the moral world:

> Every individual must endeavor to order his conduct in accordance with this end, whereby he makes his contribution such, that if everyone does likewise, perfection is attained. (530)

Schneewind ends his book with an epilogue on the historiography of moral philosophy. What is moral philosophy that one can write its history? Schneewind finds in the tradition two different answers, Socratic and Pythagorean. According to the latter (which has Pythagoras, the first moral

philosopher, as a Jew), the aim is to defend God's revelation from sinful and perverse reasoners. According to the former, it is to raise our spontaneous moral insight to the level of fully reflective knowledge. Schneewind thinks Kant is basically Pythagorean, though with Clarke, Locke, and Crusius, he sought to combine revelation with reason, and substituted Christ for Noah or Moses as the vehicle of revelation. Still, Kant evidently has his Socratic side; after all, he does seek not only to set out the one true morality, he seeks also to establish it. What these approaches share, Schneewind finds in the history he has just related little reason to accept. When we look at the history of the subject, he urges, we should try to discover what the philosophers at different times were actually doing. He agrees that there are family resemblances to be found among the authors he has assembled, but there are also significant differences among the authors' aims. And if, as Schneewind suggests we should, we take the variable aim view, we will not worry about progress in the subject, but will be content with the thought that different questions are pressing at different times. Indeed, that writers leave one question and move to another is itself a kind of progress, in Schneewind's estimate, since it seems a condition for the continuing vitality of the subject.

It should not worry us, then, that Kant's questions are not our questions. And for Schneewind, this is a liberating thought, since he finds much in Kant that he likes. Yet, like others who seek a fully secular morality, he does not share Kant's own interest in showing that we and God belong to a single moral community and that there must be a single moral law for all rational beings. He thinks, however, that there may be other reasons for holding there is such a law. The book ends with this:

> Although we may hold that our time presents its own problems to moral philosophy, we may also think that the answers Kant worked out for his problems are useful in coping with ours. And if we share his passionate conviction concerning the equal moral capacity of all normal human beings and their equal dignity, we may well think that something like his basic moral principle is more likely to yield an adequate solution to our problems than any other principle yet invented (554).