FROM REDEMPTION TO PROPER DIGNITY

BEING HUMAN IN A TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

by Sean D. Kelly
Harvard University

The standard vocabulary of modernity and post-modernity suggests that something is coming to an end. Sometimes the end is much desired. "When I fall," says Clov in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, "I'll weep for happiness." Sometimes, by contrast, the end is measured primarily by a sense of loss. "To write poetry after Auschwitz," says Theodore Adorno, "is barbaric." And sometimes, as in Martin Heidegger's later work, the end of our epoch announces the possibility of a new beginning. A famous line from Hölderlin is the catchphrase here: "In the danger, the saving power grows." But what exactly is the danger that threatens to end our age? It is something beyond the danger of climate change, nuclear annihilation, pandemics, and the other *physical* threats we confront, something underlying these that makes them alive to us as the *totalizing* terrors we feel them to be. It extends beyond the threat of our mere extinction, in other words, reaching all the way to the possibility of our ontological end.

It's hard to say what exactly this means. Perhaps the closest we can come, though it is certainly inadequate, is to say that we sometimes experience the danger of our age in apocalyptic terms: what is at stake is not just the *fact* of our existence, but its very *being* at all. Whatever this possibility amounts to, each of us experiences it differently. For Nietzsche it is the "death of God," the news of which will take a thousand years to spread; for David Foster Wallace, it is the "stomach-level sadness" that he sees in his whole generation. For Beauvoir, it is the demand for a new understanding of "woman;" for Fanon, the "fact of blackness" that reduces the black person to "crushing objecthood." Whatever the experience, however, in each case it is, somehow, the end of what we are. How are we to understand these experiences, and how are we to understand ourselves and our possibilities in the face of them? In an earlier epoch, these questions would have taken on a religious connotation. They would have been questions about sin, the wrath of God, and the end of times. But this religious vocabulary doesn't speak so easily to us in what Charles Taylor and others have called our Secular Age. So how exactly do we confront ourselves now? What is it to be human in a secular, in a technological age?

In thinking about such vast questions, I continually come up against an almost unnavigable impasse.

Namely, every way I can think of to enter the discussion they invite seems inadequate. Broadly speaking, the question aims at what Foucault once called an "historical ontology of the present" – an account, in other words, of what it is *to be human*, or even of what it is *to be at all*, at this point in history. But the problem is not just the enormity of the task; it also has to do with its structural inaccessibility to us. The words we use to describe our condition always seem to cover up what it really is. As a result, every time I start into the discussion from one point of view or another, the inadequacy of that approach inevitably becomes clear. This often takes some time, and it usually comes as a surprise. I feel like Wile E. Coyote in the old cartoon – so focused on the task of chasing after the Roadrunner that I don't notice I have already run completely off the cliff. Just so, each attempt to say clearly what I mean about our condition culminates in that nauseating moment when you look down to find the ground completely gone beneath you.

I say this here not just by way of personal anecdote, nor even because it characterizes the experience that I had trying to write this very essay (though it does). I say it because I think a deep point is hiding within it. After all, it is probably not an accident that there seems to be no adequate way to start thinking about deep philosophical questions like these. Perhaps, in fact, this is even a crucial feature of philosophy itself. Philosophy is sometimes said to arise out of our natural ambition to ask questions – questions that seem to demand satisfying answers – even as we are beings inadequate to that demand. Kant called this ambition *metaphysica naturalis* – the natural predisposition to metaphysics – and his critical project was of course devoted to understanding the proper limits of this ambition. Even though I think Kant's critique starts too late to do justice to our condition, there is nevertheless something insightful about his general idea: we naturally aspire to a state of understanding that necessarily eludes us. This is at least one aspect of the point that thinkers from Pascal and Kant to Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and beyond are highlighting when they emphasize our *finitude*: that *what must be engaged* by beings like us is ultimately infinite or at least horizonal, whereas *those who aim to engage it* necessarily come to an end. What hadn't occurred to me until now, however – at least not in quite this way – is that this limitation applies equally to our *initiation* as to our end. Just as it is impossible to complete the task of philosophical understanding, there

is no satisfying way to start it either. Something about this inadequacy is exacerbated, for me, by the written form. Plato wasn't wrong, I think, to emphasize how strange the act of writing is. Still, I must forge ahead.

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The challenge of the post-modern, technological world, as I see it, is to uncover and develop a mode of existence that "redeems" us as the beings we are. I put the word "redemption" in scare quotes here, and indeed I could have put most of the other words in scare quotes as well. Fuller reflection reveals the way each of them aims at something that is nevertheless covered up by what we normally take it to mean; or perhaps it is that each of them covers up what, without their influence, we would otherwise be able to see. This is true not least of the words "post-modern," "technological," "world," "existence," "beings," and so on. But I focus here only on the notion of redemption. In this context, it is misleading in at least two related ways.

The first is that, for some readers, the idea that we need redemption will generate standard religious overtones that are absent from my intended use. In its normal theological meaning redemption is tied up with salvation – to be redeemed is to be saved. And I do believe that in some sense we need to be *saved* from our current condition, which is why I use the term here at all. Whatever our redemption consists in, however, I do not believe it involves any *traditional* kind of deliverance from sin and damnation or any kind of reconciliation with God. Indeed, in my view the entire Judeo-Christian moral vocabulary – even as it is developed philosophically over the course of the Enlightenment by figures from Locke to Kant, and as it comes to focus in contemporary discourse through thinkers as diverse as Habermas, Rawls, Singer, and others – is inadequate to characterize our condition. Still, in some more prosaic sense I do believe the technological mode of existence presents a danger to us from which we must hope to be saved. To understand what that danger is, and to understand in what way the danger itself may hold at its core the very possibility of our salvation from it, is a descriptive project that lies at the centre of my current work.

The word "redemption" is misleading in a second way, too. It is not an accident, I believe, that the Christian

use of the term involves an economic metaphor. To redeem something is literally to buy it back. (The Latin root from which the word derives is *redimere*, from *re-* (back) + *emere* (to buy).) Those of a certain age (and perhaps a certain class!) will remember that we *redeem* the coupons we used to cut out of the newspaper. Jesus' death in the Christian tradition, therefore, is in some metaphorical sense the payment that releases Christians from sin and bondage. At the ground of this metaphor is the idea that our freedom, which is to say our redemption and eventual salvation as the kind of being we are, consists in some form of self-ownership. The idea that we will finally be free when we *own ourselves*, in other words, assumes that we are at root a kind of property that can be owned – either by ourselves or others.

This notion of self-ownership makes sense of the literal distinction between a slave, who is owned by another, and a free person who is "owned" by him or herself; and it is not an accident that the opposite of freedom in the Christian tradition is typically understood to be bondage, or the state of being a slave. This may have begun as a literal claim, as it was for Moses and his people in Egypt. But it was eventually extended to the view that sinners are slaves to their sinful desires, and Jesus' death allows the sinner to be redeemed – to buy back his freedom – from this enslaved state. Whatever the details of this theological position however – and I don't pretend to have come close to doing it justice here – I think it is not a stretch to see it grounded, at least implicitly, in what I call a market-economical interpretation of the self. The Enlightenment view tends to promote even further the economic analysis of the self that is found in the redemptive tradition. Locke, for example, defines the self explicitly in terms of a notion of self-ownership that grows out of a prior understanding of property rights. In the *Second Treatise on Government*, for instance, Locke writes: "Though men as a whole own the earth and all inferior creatures, every individual man has a property in his own person [i.e., 'owns himself']…"

There is something correct, of course, in this broadly Judeo-Christian interpretation of human beings; or at least there is something *not entirely false* in it. To be owned by another is indeed, after all, to fall short of the full kind of flourishing that human beings, *qua* human beings, are capable of. To say otherwise would be to accept the American South's pre-Civil War position that slavery is a *positive good* for the slaves. That would be ridiculous. Still, there is a serious question whether the right response to this obvious fact is to insist that the ultimate aspiration for human beings should be to *own themselves*. To say this is to assume that the self is properly classed as a kind of ownable property in the first place. Is it really very helpful to say that the relation I should hope to have to myself is the same as the relation I have to the toaster I have just bought at Walmart? So far, this is just a snarky question. I would have to do much more to push back on the market economical account of the self (I am trying to do some of this work in a book I am now completing). But for our purposes here, I hope it is enough to notice that the question *who* should own the self makes sense only if we have already accepted that to be human is to be just like anything else in the market economy – something that can be owned, traded, and given a "price" of some sort or another.

In addition to being suspicious of this market-economical account, we should recognize how pervasive it is. Even Kant's position that to be human is to have not a "relative worth (*price*)" but an "intrinsic worth (*dignity*)," defines human beings in terms of their market value – albeit negatively by claiming that our value is too high to measure. Indeed, the market-economical account of the self seems to me to be hiding beneath an enormously wide range of contemporary political and philosophical views. Some form of it can certainly be found, for instance, in the kind of Capitalism promoted by economists as diverse as Friederich von Hayek and Milton Friedman on the one hand, and John Maynard Keynes on the other, the Capitalism whose core commitment connects the ability voluntarily to perform market transactions with the individual's freedom in society. But the economical account of the self lies equally behind the Marxist view according to which we are essentially the being that works, *homo laborans*, and that we are therefore alienated from ourselves primarily insofar as we do not *own* the means of production. More generally, a version of this account of the self grounds the wide range of other effectively Judeo-Christian, Enlightenment approaches that make up the vast majority of the psychotherapeutic, sociological, political, critical, or otherwise philosophical accounts of the human self that are available to us today. This is not an accident. As
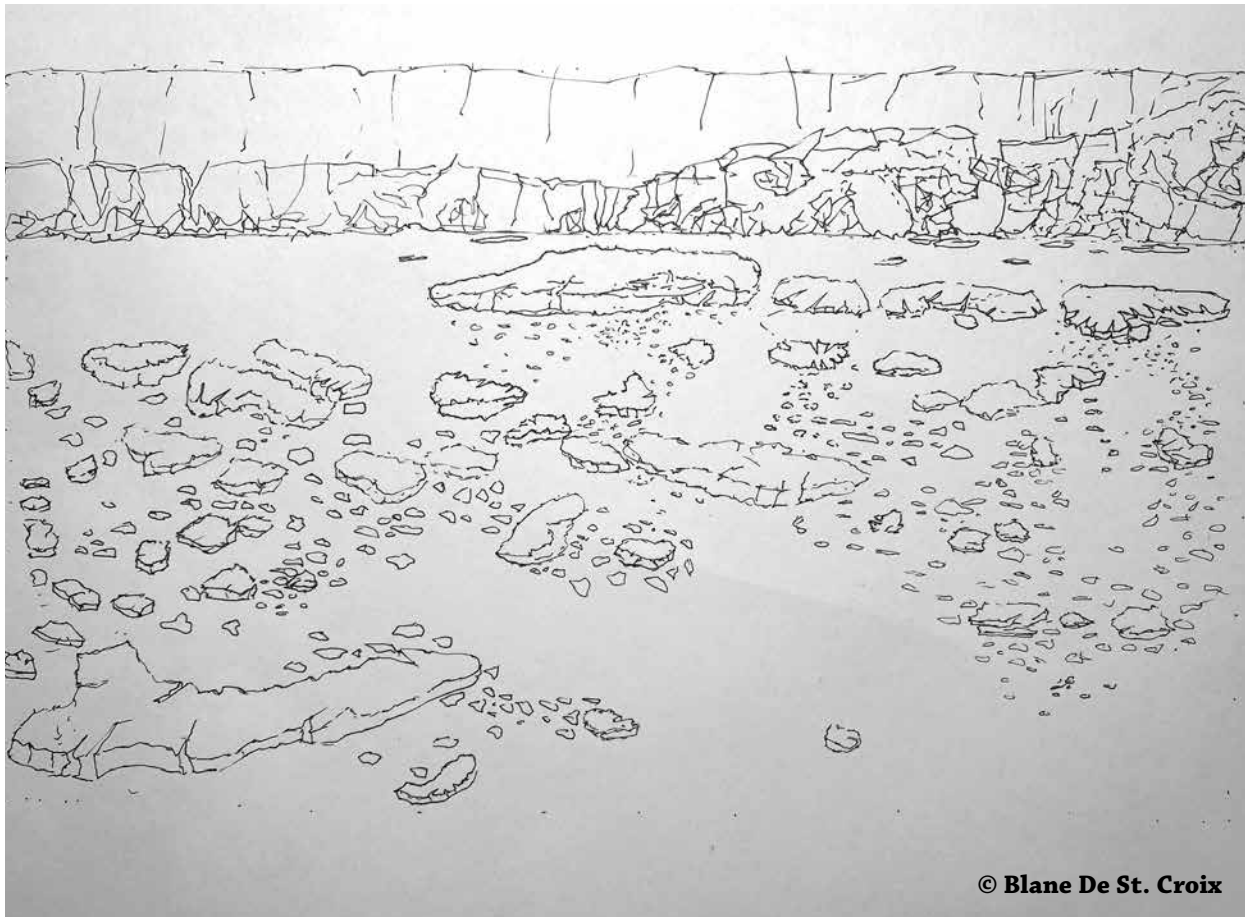
descendants of the tradition in the West that extends in equal parts from Athens and Jerusalem, this way of understanding ourselves is our natural inheritance. But holding onto it at this stage in history is demeaning. We must aspire to something more than an understanding of ourselves that assimilates us to a form of property.

To be clear, then: it is certainly wrong to say that some human beings are properly owned by others. But the claim that our ultimate aspiration must be to own ourselves depends upon an interpretation of human being in terms of a property standard that seems to me essentially alien to what it is to be us.

I take from this the intuition that the Judeo-Christian moral vocabulary, which the Enlightenment tradition inherited and developed, and which continues to pervade our discourse, may not be able to do what we need to capture and treat our contemporary condition well. In particular, the economic interpretation of the self may not be able to characterize what we are and what we need at this point in history. The background economic assumption about the self is so deeply rooted in our understanding of ourselves, however, that it is almost completely hidden from view. Because it is never really made explicit or scrutinized, it is allowed to govern our orientation with respect to ourselves ever more powerfully. A governing force like this happens on the sly: the more pervasive and publicly acceptable it is, the slier and more hidden it becomes. To the extent that the orientation it sets us in with respect to ourselves and the world is inadequate for our current needs, to the extent that it covers up the danger we confront instead of freeing us for our salvation from it, it is an essential part of the danger itself.

I hope it is clear from this brief discussion that, if I initially use the term "redemption" to name the mode

of existence we are called to uncover and develop in the contemporary world, I am nevertheless rejecting not only the traditional Christian interpretation of this term but also the market-economical analysis of the self that I see lying at the ground of that interpretation. The word "redemption" does its work, of course: it highlights the need we feel at this point in history to be saved from a danger we cannot quite identify. But the presuppositions of the notion of redemptive freedom force an interpretation of that danger that seems inadequate to the conditions in which we find ourselves.

So, what exactly can we say about that danger? Different thinkers have characterized it in different ways. Nietzsche called it nihilism, and he distinguished between a positive and a negative form of it; Heidegger first called it levelling (following Kierkegaard), and later enframing [*Gestell*]; Camus and Nagel called it the absurd, and so on. However we may characterize it, though, the danger we feel seems to have a distinctive shape. It is very different, for instance, from the danger to the Christian of being sinful and therefore condemned to damnation; it is different too from the danger to the Homeric Greeks of affronting the gods with their hubris. Our situation is *felt as dangerous*, for sure, but it is a danger of a distinctive kind.

Moreover, the "post-modern, technological age" that is shaped around this contemporary form of danger has a distinctive character as well. It is the age, for Nietzsche, in which God is dead and the free spirit and the *Übermensch* are called for; it is the age, for Heidegger, in which we are confronted by *the question* whether god is fleeing from us, and by the related question whether we can still experience this flight genuinely; it is the age, for Sartre, in which there is no God and so we must take his place; but it is also the age for Beauvoir in which we must contend with what it is not to have been born, but to become, a woman; and the age for Fanon in which the black man wants to become white. In all these respects our moment in history is quite different, for example, from the Enlightenment as Kant understands it. For Kant, the Enlightenment is the age in which human beings are emerging from "our self-incurred immaturity." But immaturity is not the problem from which we feel we must be saved any more than sin and damnation is. And maturity is not the name for our salvation. The upshot, I take it, is that we need a new vocabulary to describe our epoch of history.

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Perhaps, then, we should consider a different way of characterizing the project. Instead of aiming for a mode of existence that *redeems* us, for example, we might say that we should identify an *authentic* form of existence. This term stands in contrast with the idea that the self is a kind of property to be owned, and so in some sense it is preferable to "redemption." But it is not quite what I'm looking for either. Let me look briefly at the modern history of the term to develop this point.

"Authenticity" is the traditional English translation of the German word *eigentlichkeit*, a word that plays a central role in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. It would be wrong to assimilate Heidegger's position on authenticity to any kind of Romanticism, but it is true nevertheless that a focus on the importance of *some notion of* authenticity takes root at least as far back as the work of Rousseau, and the Romantic tradition that took inspiration from it. Taking a more literal translation of the German word, we might say that authenticity, like redemption, also involves a kind of "ownedness." But there is a difference between the self-ownership of redeemed freedom and the ownedness of authenticity.

To be *authentic* is to "be one's own" in the sense of "being what one truly is." Kierkegaard's injunction to "become what one is" makes an intervention that is crucial for the contemporary ethics of authenticity. His idea is that *we own ourselves* not when we are freed from the constraints of bondage – be they external, like the commands of a slave owner to a slave, or internal, like the sinful desires of the Christian or the heteronomous determinations of the will in Kant – but instead when we are somehow positively involved in *becoming who we are*. We may read the command to *become what one is* as the demand to act in such a way as to bring it about that you are *true to*, or a *genuine and original manifestation of*, the being (or the kind of being) that you already find yourself to be.

In the traditional, contemporary interpretation, authenticity is tied up with a notion of self-authorship or self-actualization. We can see this connection from the common root that the words authentic and

author are often taken (albeit mistakenly) to share. To be authentic, it is often argued, is to be the true or genuine author of one's existence. This form of self-ownership, therefore, stands in stark contrast with the economic account of the self that grounds the Christian idea of redeemed freedom. If we want a pithy motto to distinguish these two interpretations of the self, we can say that authenticity prioritizes "being one's own" while the redemptive tradition prioritizes "being what one owns."

But there are problems with the authenticity tradition too. To begin with, in its paradigmatic instantiation – not only in Kierkegaard but in thinkers like Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, and others – it *substitutes* the idea that we are an object to be owned with the idea that we are a subject who establishes the truth of what we are. But the reversal of the relative priority of subject and object, it seems to me, is not a sufficiently radical re-orientation. As Heidegger once said in a related context, the reversal of a metaphysical statement is still a metaphysical statement. To place our truth within the subject, I want to claim, is still to hew too closely to the traditional notions of subject and object, and to the Judeo-Christian morality out of which these notions grow, to allow us to contend with our contemporary condition.

In short, if we understand the concept of authenticity in terms of self-authorship then, although it does release us from the economic interpretation of the self, it nevertheless tends to push us heavily in the direction of the idea that the self is that over which we must aim to have complete control and mastery. But this ambition is even more dangerous for us than the ambition to have ownership rights over ourselves. After all, to think of oneself as a property over which one has ownership rights is to free oneself from the intrusion of others in decisions about what I should do. The desire to own oneself is essentially the desire for a certain kind of freedom. By contrast, if to be authentic is to find the sole ground for one's existence in oneself, the threat is no longer merely the potential intrusion of others, but the overwhelming magnitude of the responsibility one has for oneself.

This position takes an extreme form in the work of Sartre in the 1940s. Sartre recognizes, in the overwhelming burden of the responsibility he believes we have for ourselves, the source of all our existential angst; but he aims for a kind of "optimistic toughness" with respect to it. When Sartre says that "God does not exist, and we have to face the consequences of this," for instance, he means that we alone are responsible for who we are. There is no mercy in a view like this. If I am the sum of my acts, for instance, and responsible for them all, then I cannot now *be* someone I have not already become, and I can never, coming out of this moment, *be other than* the person I already am. It is only the infinitely willful act of a groundless leap that can bring me to be something new. Furthermore, life is nothing but a continuing sequence of such groundless leaps. The burden is infinite at every moment, and it is therefore a genuine question whether the position Sartre articulates is livable at all. He does insist on a kind of optimism about it. But after all, he concedes, "We can understand why our doctrine horrifies certain people."

A nod to this kind of Sartrean toughness can sometimes be found in the new scientific atheism that is defended by contemporary writers such as Richard Dawkins or Sam Harris. Dawkins, for instance, deplores the "saccharine false purpose" that he associates with religious belief and applauds the "laudable tough-mindedness in the debunking of cosmic sentimentality." His atheism, like Sartre's, leads him to presume that "there is indeed no purpose in the ultimate fate of the cosmos." Whether this observation "robs life of the warmth that makes it worth living," however, whether the positive view Dawkins holds about life's meaning is as horrifying as Sartre recognizes his own to be, depends not just on Dawkins' atheism but on whether he believes in addition, as Sartre does, that the responsibility for our self-authorship rests entirely with each of us as individuals. Not being a philosopher, Dawkins has little to say about this issue. He does insist that his view of the human situation is not cold and bleak, that it allows room for "personal hope." But the foundation on which we are to "ground our life's hopes," in the absence of cosmic significance, is, in Dawkins' presentation, entirely unclear. One is left with the strong suspicion that the "hope" he wants to leave room for makes sense only in the context of the kind of eschatological framework he denies. At any rate, if this is not the case then Dawkins does little to persuade us of that.

There are other concerns about the authenticity

tradition as well. If the interpretation of authenticity in terms of self-authorship fails to release us sufficiently from the grip of the Enlightenment, a different interpretation, in terms of what might be called *genuineness*, threatens to launch us into fascism. This, at any rate, is the criticism levelled by the Frankfurt School against what Adorno called the "jargon of authenticity." Walter Benjamin was probably the first to develop a criticism like this, when he registered his suspicion of the "aura" that hangs around artworks identified as genuine or original or authentic. Benjamin's influential 1935 essay, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," ties the aura of an authentic artwork to certain kinds of religious practice that give it its power. Mechanically reproduced art does not have this kind of aura, and for Benjamin this *frees* the artwork to stand on its own, outside of religious impulse: "mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual." For Benjamin, this is already a kind of Hegelian-Marxist argument to suggest that the absence of aura in mechanically reproduced art represents the kind of *progress* that history can make when the ritual and political structures supporting the ambition to authenticity are removed. But it was Adorno who tied the jargon of authenticity directly to fascism itself. For him, the ambition to authenticity is nothing more than the naked and retrograde ambition to re-establish a kind of religious authority in the wake of the decline of religion. "To the converted and unconverted philosophers of fascism," he wrote in 1945, "values like authenticity … become a means of usurping religious-authoritarian pathos without the least religious content."

We see from this that whether we interpret authenticity as self-authorship or genuineness, the phenomenon aligns with a worrisome ambition to mastery and control that is more likely at the origin of the danger we confront in the technological age than it is our salvation from it. I conclude from this that the terminology of authenticity is no more sufficient to address the questions with which I opened this essay than the terminology of redemption is. Indeed, it may be worse. This suggests that we should try a third time to articulate the challenge of our historical situation. I turn briefly to this third option now.

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Instead of redemption or authenticity, I believe our historical condition demands that we pursue an appropriate form of human dignity. I don't claim that this third interpretation of human being is in any objective sense "correct." But I do believe it is appropriate for us now, given the moment in history at which we live. In short, the aim that is appropriate to our existence now must engage the proper *dignity* of human being.

I cannot go into this proposal in any relevant detail here (I will leave that larger project for my forthcoming book, which is called *The Proper Dignity of Human Being*), but I can say at least a word or two to motivate the position. To start with, let's remember that the term "dignity," and its antecedents in Latin and other languages, has a history as well. Perhaps the most well-known use of this term, which I have mentioned already, is found in Kant. On his Enlightenment view, human beings are distinguished from all other beings in the universe by the fact that we have a dignity instead of a price. As I have mentioned already, however, this account of human beings implicitly presupposes an economic standard. Among other things, therefore, the account of our proper dignity must start by questioning this influential Kantian interpretation of the term. Let me say a word about what that interpretation is.

Kant's view is subtle and complex, and I cannot do it justice here. But his first move, at least, is to tie our *dignity* to the moral constraint that we are the beings who must be treated as an end not a means. This is not to say that we never do, as a matter of fact, treat human beings as a means. Slavery is the most extreme form of this immoral treatment, and Kant was quite familiar with it. Kant was against slavery, although (strangely) his actual condemnation of it is suspiciously unsatisfying. Instead of arguing against slavery directly, Kant argues that nobody could voluntarily choose to become a slave, because the free person who signs away his freedom in a contract is involved in a contradiction. (Whether Kant's unsatisfying view about slavery is tied to his notorious racism is an interesting question.) Still, the existence of slavery is consistent with a broadly Kantian idea that slavery is a moral wrong. It is wrong in the Kantian view, ultimately, because it uses a person as a means not an end.

We can agree with Kant that it is wrong to treat a

person as a means towards some independent end – whether that end is, for example, our own happiness or the production of some good from which we hope to profit or something else – without conceding that our dignity as human beings consists entirely in our *not being used* in this way. After all, the person living alone on his planet, like the king with no subjects in Saint-Exupéry's charming story, is not being used as a tool for anything. Still, nobody would claim (least of all the little prince who discovers him) that the king's existence is dignified. Now, this is hardly a knock-down argument against Kant's account of human dignity. Indeed, it is not even a particularly good *account* of Kant's view of dignity in the first place – it leaves out the connection in Kant between dignity and autonomy, for instance, as well as the dignity of the moral law and the respect that human beings are due in virtue of their being its embodiment. (For further discussion of Kant's view of dignity, and much else, see the terrific little book by my colleague Michael Rosen called *Dignity: Its History and Meaning*.) Still, the example does highlight the possibility that our dignity, which is to say the feature of human beings in virtue of which we are worthy *qua* human beings, goes beyond our doing our duty with respect to the moral law.

Part of the reason for the inadequacy of Kant's view, I believe, is that its *negative* definition of human dignity – to have dignity is for there to be *no price* that defines one's worth – leaves us little to aim for but self-control. The dour Pietism at the core of Kant's view sees serious and unflagging commitment to our own moral piety as the defining object of human existence. Now, of course, it is not *bad* to perform moral acts. Indeed, it is certainly *a kind of* goodness *not* to perform *immoral* acts. But it is a serious question whether the life of moral constraint is the highest form of existence available to us in the technological age. Is the artist or the athlete or the great musician, for instance, or even the political revolutionary, properly measured by the degree to which they have done their moral duty? Of course, we should hold these folks (like all others) to high moral standards. It is a personal deficit of Paul Gauguin or Wilt Chamberlain or Martin Luther King, Jr., for instance, if they engaged in some of the immoral behaviour of which they are accused. But the question whether they have created great artworks or given magnificent performances or made the world a better place is left largely open even if those moral facts are settled against them. Indeed, if Bernard Williams is right, the greatness of their contributions might help to determine whether their apparently atrocious behavior was acceptable after all: if Gauguin's Tahitian artwork was good enough as art, for example, it might turn out to justify his having left behind his family to pursue it.

Whether Williams is right about this or not, however, what seems certain is that the standards for creative or social greatness are not determined entirely by the degree to which they uphold the moral law: even if Plato was right that great artwork *must be* morally good, not everything that is morally good counts as great art. Moreover, surely these creative and artistic forms of existence are among the ones that we rightly hold as countering the utter banality that seems so threatening in our technological age. Perhaps we should think of them, then, as at least a clue to the *proper* form of human dignity. If this clue is leading in an interesting direction, then it might suggest there is something more that we can aim for than the moral law; there is more to life than *merely* doing what we ought. We must ask, therefore, in what this *proper* dignity consists.

For the time being, I will leave this difficult question to one side. As I have said already, it is partly the aim of my forthcoming book to pursue it in greater detail. Instead, in Part II of this essay (to be published in the next issue), I would like to pursue a different, but related, question. It is not about what the right way is to characterize *the challenge* that confronts us – whether as the demand for redemption or authenticity or dignity – but about the *conditions* in which we now confront this challenge. It is about our moment in history, in other words, and how it has formed us as the human beings we are. The technological culture in which we exist, I believe, puts us in a particularly dangerous relation to ourselves and our world. I turn to the characterization of that danger next.

Sean Dorrance Kelly is the Teresa G. and Ferdinand F. Martignetti Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, where he is also a Harvard College Professor. With his wife,

Cheryl Chen, he serves as the Faculty Dean of Dunster House, one of the twelve Residential Houses at Harvard College. Kelly's 2011 book, All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age, *co-authored with Hubert Dreyfus, was a New York Times bestseller. His forthcoming book,* The Proper Dignity of Human Being, *will be published by Harvard University Press.* twitter.com/sean_d_kelly