

Kant's ideas for a universal history

Philosophy



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Response to Kants Ideas for a Universal History Natural laws determine manifestations of the will. In this article, Kant attempts to find a natural principle for the history of living beings which if found would help depict the future. Creatures' natural capacities develop in conformity with their end. Natural capacities for the use of reason in man are developed fully only in species and instead of the individual. Nature lets man get what he procures for himself by his own reason. Nature develops capacities using antagonism that eventually becomes a law-governed social order. The biggest challenge for man that may remain unsolved forever is attainment of a civil society that can apply justice universally. A perfect civil constitution can never be established without good law-governed external relationships among states. Nature plans to establish a perfect political constitution. Identification of a universal history compliant with the plan of nature is possible.

Kant asserts that history of living beings is formed by free will rather than nature. I slightly agree with him because I believe that free will does play a cardinal role in forming history. Nevertheless, the role of nature in the formation of history cannot be completely wiped out since nature is what exposes the living beings to different challenges and situations in which they make decisions out of their free will and understanding. I disagree that assumption of a plan of nature would lead us to comforting prospects of future as Kant believes would happen because there is a lot of subjectivity and great margin for error embedded in such an approach.